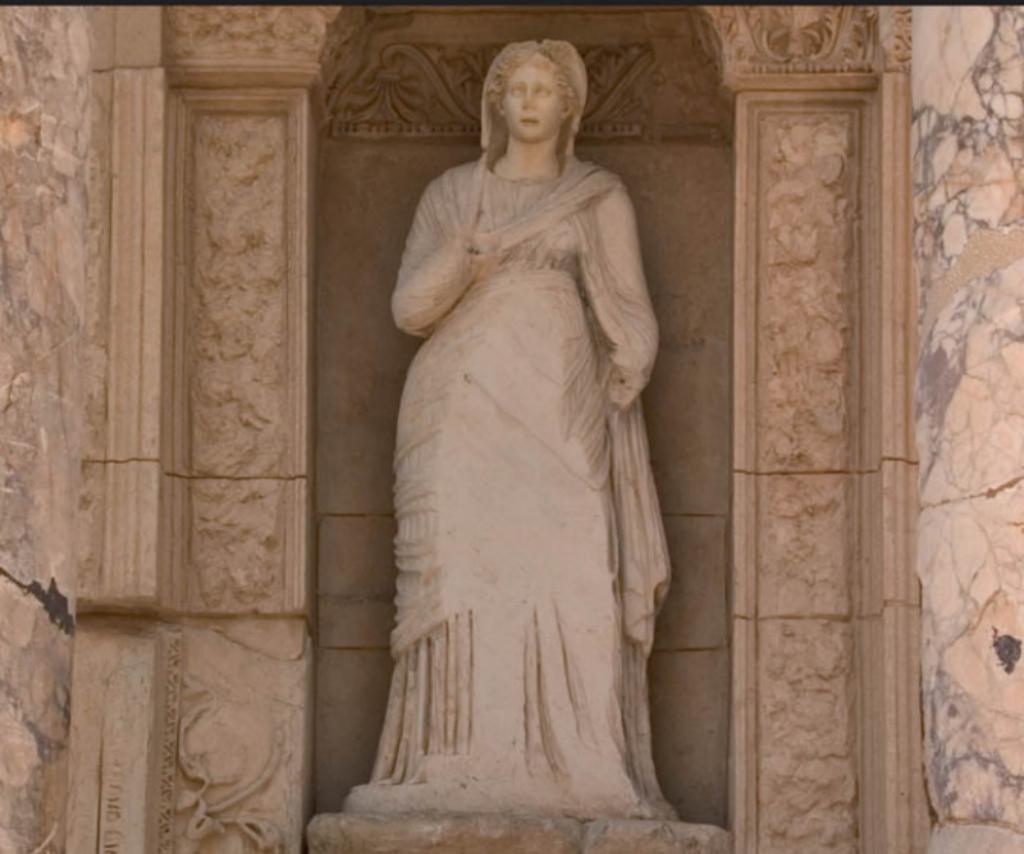A. A. LONG

From Epicurus to Epictetus

STUDIES IN HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PHILOSOPHY

FROM EPICURUS TO EPICTETUS

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From Epicurus
to Epictetus

Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy

A. A. LONG

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

In memoriam
EJFJ and TBLW

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Preface

In *Stoic Studies* I collected a dozen papers on the school's ethics, psychology, and intellectual tradition that I had previously published in journals and multi-authored volumes. This book is partly a sequel to that earlier one by including a further set of essays I have written on Stoicism, but in this larger collection scepticism and Epicureanism receive comparable attention. In fact the book covers most of the topics in Hellenistic and Roman philosophy that have engaged my interest over the past thirty years. These topics include, most prominently, ethics, by which I mean not only moral theory but also the psychology of selfhood and emotion, social philosophy, and political thought. Besides ethics, the book discusses three other topics that particularly intrigue me—epistemology, language, and cosmology (which, in the ancient context, includes theology).

Ethics is chiefly represented in Parts I and V of the book and in two of the chapters on Epicureanism, but the subject was so central to Hellenistic and Roman philosophy that it is also featured, to some extent, throughout all five parts. To underscore its centrality, I begin in Chapters 1 and 2 with a pair of general studies that explore the common ground as well as the differences between the ways of life advocated by Epicurus and Zeno. As the founding fathers of their respective philosophies, these figures make an appropriate beginning for the whole book. I end in Part V, first with Cicero, whom I treat both for his own sake and as an important contributor to the Stoic tradition of political thought, and finally with the Roman Stoics Seneca and Epictetus.

The three intervening parts of the book deal with the principal movements of Hellenistic philosophy, and in them too I proceed, as far as possible, chronologically and comprehensively. Part II includes five studies of scepticism, starting in Chapter 3 with an essay that considers Aristotelian epistemology in relation to early and later Pyrrhonism, and concluding, in the essay pro and contra astrology (Chapter 7), with material that ranges in date from Cicero, through Sextus Empiricus and Ptolemy, down to Augustine. I devote Chapters 4 and 5 to the seminal work of Timon, Pyrrho's publicist, and Arcesilaus, the founder of what we call Academic scepticism. The other leading representative of Academic scepticism was Carneades. He figures

prominently in Chapter 6, the study of scepticism about gods, on which our main sources are Cicero and Sextus Empiricus.

In Part III I start with a study of Epicurean cosmology and causality (Chapter 8), drawing heavily on Lucretius as well as the fragmentary work of Epicurus himself. Not only these two Epicureans but also other Epicurean thinkers provide material for Chapter 9, the essay on pleasure and social utility. In Chapter 10, while Epicurus himself is still prominent, Lucretius and his Roman context are the principal focus of attention.

Early (pre-Roman) Stoicism is the subject of Part IV. Here I begin (Chapter 11) with a study that proposes Plato as the principal catalyst for Zeno's highly original epistemology, which in turn strongly motivated the scepticism of the Academic Arcesilaus. Stoic contributions to the study of language are my theme in Chapter 12, where I situate their linguistic innovations in the context of their rationalist psychology. In Chapter 13 I turn to the strange but fascinating doctrine of world-conflagration and everlasting recurrence.

The Roman philosophy of the book's title registers contributions that I find it important to emphasize over and above the obvious fact that some philosophy was composed in Latin. A reader who reaches Part V of the book will already have encountered Lucretius, whose poetic rendering of Epicureanism in Latin is a gigantic achievement. Lucretius was a philosopher in his own right, but he presented himself as primarily his master's voice, and so I treat him in Part III. Cicero, by contrast, is too complex in his philosophical orientation to be housed in any of the book's earlier parts. He is the principal figure of Part V, not only where he is named, in Chapters 14 and 15, but also in Chapter 16, where much of my treatment of Stoic ideas about persons, property ownership, and community is filtered through Cicero's *De officiis*. In its Roman importations, Stoic ethics acquired some distinctly Roman colouring but without losing its original Greek integrity. I illustrate this in my two concluding essays, Chapter 17 on Seneca, and Chapter 18 on Epictetus.

These two studies are the only work in this book that has not had an earlier airing in periodicals or multi-authored volumes. However, I have edited and revised everything else, updating it where that seemed necessary and sometimes appending postscripts to indicate my later thoughts and subsequent bibliography. In deciding what to include in this collection, apart from the necessity to be selective, I have been primarily guided by the wish to produce a book that is sufficiently broad and accessible to interest general readers as well as specialists. My selection excludes articles of a largely technical character and

work that seems too antiquated or too recent to warrant reproduction here. Many of these items, however, are included in the book's bibliography.

As I remarked in the preface of *Stoic Studies*, so here too each of these pieces began its life as the result of an invitation to lecture or contribute to a conference or collective volume. I am immensely grateful for these encouragements to write on the subject-matter of the book and for all the comments friends far too numerous to mention here have given me. (Though I have registered my special thanks to some of them in the notes to chapters, I must have benefited to a much greater extent than those mentions indicate.) I owe a special thanks to Peter Momtchiloff of Oxford University Press for prompting me to produce the book and for all the help he has given at its various stages of production. I am also grateful to two graduate students at Berkeley, Curtis Dozier and Will Shearin, and to Patricia Slatin, a former graduate student, for assistance in preparing the typescript.

My life as a teacher and scholar of ancient philosophy would never have happened without the crucial prompting and support of two remarkable people, who were close friends of one another. Eric James (Lord James of Rusholme), High Master of Manchester Grammar School during my seven high-school years there, fired my interest in Plato by his brilliant teaching. It was thanks to his advice that I applied for admission to University College London. As a student there, I came under the charismatic and kindly influence of Tom Webster (Professor of Greek). It was entirely due to his encouragement that I was diverted from an administrative career and obtained my first teaching job at the University of Otago, New Zealand. I dedicate this book to the memory of these two great men.

Acknowledgements

Apart from Chapter 17, all these studies have been published in earlier form elsewhere. They are reprinted, with minor adaptations, deletions, and additions, thanks to permission of the original publishers, whom I am grateful to acknowledge here.

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Citations and Abbreviations

Full references to ancient authors and their works are given in the Index Locorum. For citations in the form Sedley 1999, see the Bibliography. The following abbreviations are used for frequently cited ancient and modern authors and collections:

DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn. (Berlin, 1952)
DL	Diogenes Laertius
EN	Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*
KD	Epicurus, *Kuriai doxai*
LS	A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1987). Volume 1 includes translations of the principal sources, with philosophical commentary, and volume 2 gives the corresponding Greek and Latin texts with notes and bibliography. A reference in the form LS 61A refers to the chapter number of either volume and the corresponding letter entry
M	Sextus Empiricus, *Against the mathematicians*
PE	Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*
PH	Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*
Sent. Vat.	Epicurus' sayings in a Vatican manuscript
SVF	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. H. von Arnim, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1903–5). This is the standard collection of evidence for early Stoicism
Usener	*Epicurea*, ed. H. Usener (Leipzig, 1887)

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PART I

GENERAL

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1

Hellenistic ethics and philosophical power

The legacy of the Hellenistic philosophers is unique in one respect. Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the English language has appropriated the words stoic(al), sceptic(al), epicurean, and cynic(al) as ways of describing character, attitudes, and behaviour. These terms have lost some of their Graeco-Roman connotations, but they continue to preserve a significant link with their origins. If we call someone today a stoic or an epicurean, we are making a comment on an ethical outlook by calling attention to highly general characteristics that imply certain basic attitudes to life and exclude others. The terms presuppose consistency on the part of the person they are applied to. We don't expect someone who is stoical on Monday to be cynical or epicurean or sceptical on Tuesday. As terms denoting persistent dispositions, these words are similar to introverted, extroverted, intense, laid-back, and so forth.

The three greatest Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, have left no such legacy. We speak of Platonic love and Socratic irony, but we have not turned Socratic and Platonic into terms denoting an ethical type. Professional philosophers might call one of their number an 'Aristotelian', but it would not be clear, without explanation, what this meant. The peculiarity of the Hellenistic philosophers in this respect appears to be quite general. It is not informative to describe a non-philosopher as a Cartesian or a Kantian or a Hegelian. To understand the special significance of Hellenistic ethics, we should try to probe this peculiarity. Here I want to approach it as a question concerning the intellectual history of Hellenistic philosophy in its formative years. A comprehensive answer would have to include subsequent

developments of the Hellenistic schools, their reception at Rome, and their entry into the Renaissance. My focus will be restricted to asking what it was about the ethical projects of the innovative Hellenistic philosophers that prepared the way for this curious legacy. Why did their philosophy and in particular their ethics lend itself to description as a *hairesis*, a 'choice' or 'policy' or 'persuasion'?[1] What can we learn about ethics and its history, and about the cultural politics of Hellenistic Athens, by reflecting on the mutual exclusivity and determinacy of early Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Pyrrhonian scepticism, by which I mean the notion that an ethical praxis requires commitment to so sharply a defined view of life that it identifies you as an adherent of just one school? What can we learn about the same matters by drawing attention to paradigms, concepts, and approaches that exhibit striking similarities between the different schools?

It has been commonly said that Hellenistic philosophy derives much of its special character from social and political crisis.[2] Individuals, unsettled by turbulent change, are thought to have found the traditional institutions and values of the polis an inadequate context for defining their lives. It is not clear, however, that this is either explanatory or even true. The primary impediments to happiness, according to Epicurus, are fear of divine control of the world and fear of death (*KD* 11–12). Conditions of life at Hellenistic Athens seem no more appropriate to that diagnosis than was the age of Pericles. Hellenistic philosophers, to be sure, propose ways of life that discount or eliminate or reorient conventional objects of fear and desire. Yet that, so far from being new, had been the dominant thrust of philosophical ethics since Socrates. We are inclined to overlook this point because the huge presence of Aristotle intervenes between Socrates and early Hellenistic philosophy.

Aristotle's work in ethics and politics is an extraordinary analytical achievement, but in an important respect it is untypical. Its great strength lies in Aristotle's clarification of such concepts as virtue, choice, friendship, and justice, and in his persuasive accommodation of the claims of rationality, pleasure, and emotion as constituents of the good life. In much of its detailed content, however, this work is quite conservative, and that is a central feature of Aristotle's methodology. He is concerned to give respectful consideration

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[1] For an exhaustive study of the history and application of the term *hairesis*, see Glucker 1978, 159–92.
[2] See e.g. Bevan 1913, 32. I have questioned the usefulness of such claims in Long 1974, 2–4.

to values and practices that were highly prized in Greek culture. He does not question the constituents of 'gentlemanly' conduct, as prescribed by tradition, and he does not challenge basic political institutions or the status of women and slaves. He never suggests that it could be reasonable to establish one's life on a unitary conception of the good, or to look to the nature of things in general as a foundation for ultimate values. His ethical outlook is pluralist, in the sense that it acknowledges competing claims on a thoughtful person's attention. But it does not treat the question, 'what should I do?', as one which could invite radically discrepant answers by enlightened people.

In these respects, Aristotle's ethical outlook is strikingly different from that of Socrates and Plato. That point can stand, I trust, without detailed justification, but we also need to distinguish Socrates from Plato, in order to focus our inquiry into the special character of Hellenistic ethics. Plato was Socrates' profoundest interpreter and transmitter, but it is Socrates, rather than Plato, who most clearly anticipates the tenor of Hellenistic ethics. It was Socrates who gave currency to the notion of a 'wise man', whose life is an extraordinary challenge to conventional views on human needs and priorities and yet a paradigm of excellence and happiness. Socrates founded no school, and he was too idiosyncratic and complex to be fully appropriated by any of his immediate followers. But the challenge of Socrates persisted, transmitted to the Hellenistic world through such different intermediaries as Antisthenes and Diogenes (the Cynic Socrates), Aristippus (the Cyrenaic and hedonist Socrates), the Socrates of Plato and Xenophon, and eventually, in the Academy, the sceptical Socrates.[3]

What is Socratic about Hellenistic ethics? Not, or not necessarily, a doctrinal inheritance—central though that is in the case of Stoicism—but a particular view of what ethics should be about: the questioning of convention, the removal of fears and desires that lack any rational foundation, a radical reordering of priorities with a view to the soul's health, and, above all, the notion of self-mastery.

I will explain this notion in more detail shortly, but a more general point needs to be made first. The new Hellenistic schools seem, at our distance in time, extraordinarily one-sided in their ethical orientations. The Stoics insist that pleasurable and painful sensations make no difference to genuine happiness. The Epicureans claim that virtue, though a necessary instrument of happiness, must be subordinate to pleasure, which is the sole thing that is good

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[3] I have explored many aspects of this large topic in Long 1988 and Long 1999*a*.

in itself. The Pyrrhonists centre happiness exclusively in scepticism. Ordinary intuitions lead one to think that the most satisfactory life should be based on a balanced range of goods and attitudes (an Aristotelian specification) rather than such one-sided options.

Yet, if we are genuinely searching for a plan of life that will secure long-term happiness and excellence, it seems unduly limited to presume that an ethical philosopher should be thoroughly accommodating to ordinary intuitions since some of these are presumably problematic in various ways. That was certainly not the Socratic impulse. Suppose, instead, that a philosopher finds such confusion and inconsistency and source of disquiet in many current ideas about the good life that he sees his task as one of reconstituting the self on new foundations. The test of an ethical project of this kind will not be its descriptive and analytical effectiveness in handling the whole range of cultural data but how well it works as an 'art of life'. Perhaps ethics is unavoidably one-sided, and we just have to decide whether the Epicurean or the Stoic way is the one for us. It is certainly striking that the innovative Hellenistic philosophers did not plump for some comfortable middle ground, and we should infer from this that their mutual exclusiveness was part of their appeal.

In addition, we need to think of ethics in the early Hellenistic period as a *hot* subject. The boldness of the various options recalls the earliest days of Greek philosophy, when each thinker patented his own cosmological thesis. At that time the exciting thought had dawned that new truths about nature were waiting to be discovered. Hellenistic philosophers show a similar confidence in their ethical inquiries. Their project is to make individual happiness a universally accessible objective, something whose foundations can be fully ascertained and shown to depend on two fundamental conditions—correct understanding of the world and human nature, and excellence of character. One ethical option helped to generate another through inter-school controversy and contact. Early Stoicism derived much of its impetus from opposition to Epicureanism, and the schools in general propagated specific versions of their own 'wise man'. Some options, like early Pyrrhonism, faded out, or were assimilated into another philosophy, as happened with the absorption of the Cyrenaics into Epicureanism. But at the period with which I am concerned, the early years of the third century, the range and variety of the options reached its maximum. Even a totally forgotten figure can show the significance of this cultural phenomenon. The Cyrenaic Hegesias adopted as his version of the goal of life (*telos*) 'living without bodily or mental pain' (DL 2.95). He drew an inference concerning the efficacy of death in removing

us from bad things as distinct from good ones, and so many of his audience committed suicide that Ptolemy Philadelphus prohibited him from lecturing (Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.83).

Comic poets mocked the philosophers' failure to agree on specifications of 'the good' (e.g. Philemon, fr. 71 Kock), but there is remarkable consensus among the philosophers about the type of character that their ethics seeks to produce. Epicurus is said to have recommended Pyrrho's character but his own (i.e. Epicurus') doctrines (DL 9.64). I propose that we see this character type as a new kind of hero, a living embodiment of philosophical power, a figure whose appeal to the Hellenistic world consisted in self-mastery.

THE SOCRATIC LEGACY OF SELF-MASTERY

Our religious and ethical traditions have so familiarized us with the notion of self-control that it seems hard to imagine a society which had such a notion in only a tenuous form. Yet I believe this was the case with Greece prior to Socrates. It goes without saying, of course, that Greeks from Homer to Aeschylus could express and practise self-restraint, refrain from acting on first impulse, deliberately undergo extraordinary privations, and develop paradigms of single-minded endurance, such as Odysseus and Heracles. I acknowledge that they had terms such as *sōphrosynē* and *aidōs*, which it might sometimes be proper to translate by 'self-control'. But self-control, as I am using that expression, is something different. What I have in mind is a pre-Freudian notion of a self that is completely transparent to reflection, and over which their owners claim such complete authority that they find themselves in total charge of where their life is going and indulge their emotions and appetites only to the extent that they themselves determine.

A self with this degree of authoritativeness, transparency, and concentration is largely alien, I think, to Greek experience and conceptualization before Socrates.[4] Authority was always diffuse and divisive in traditional Greek culture, whether we refer to religion, politics, or individual scales of value, and I need hardly illustrate the rarity of self-control in my sense from the situations and persons of classical Greek history and literature. The development

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[4] Support for this claim can be drawn from the careful work of North (1966, 69–70). She finds mastery of passion the 'new emphasis in Euripides' interpretation of' *sōphrosynē*. She also writes: 'Certain Sophists appear to have been among the first to develop systematically the concept of *sōphrosynē* as the control of man's lower impulses and appetites.' This seems to me to be correct provided that we include Socrates among 'certain Sophists'.

of the Greek term that eventually captures it best, *enkrateia*, is remarkably suggestive. This word does not occur before Plato and Xenophon. The corresponding adjective is found earlier, but solely in reference to physical or political power over something, and not as an attribute of a person's character. Callicles (in Plato, *Gorg.* 491d11) says he does not understand Socrates when the latter talks of 'ruling oneself'. Socrates, almost certainly with irony, says he means nothing complicated but, as the many say, *sōphrōn* and *enkratē heautou*, 'ruling the pleasures and passions within himself'.[5]

In this passage it is the unfamiliar expression, *enkratē heautou*, which is used to gloss the hackneyed term *sōphrōn*, so that the latter can denote a disposition of the self in terms of ruler (reason) and ruled (pleasures and passions).[6] It was the life and philosophy of Socrates, I suggest, that primarily prompted this use of *enkratēs* and gave a purchase for the new noun *enkrateia*. As characterized by Xenophon, Socrates was 'the most *enkratēs* of all men over sex and bodily appetite, most hardy (*karteros*) in relation to winter and summer and all exertions, and so trained for needing moderate amounts that he was easily satisfied when he had only little' (*Mem.* 1.2.1).[7]

Further evidence for the novelty of the concept 'self-control' is the rarity of Plato's use of *enkratēs* without the addition of the reflexive pronoun. In other words, he feels the need to spell out the 'self' that is controlled (e.g. *Rep.* 3, 390b). An exception to this, but a highly revealing one, is his description of 'the human being within', that is, the soul's rational part, as *enkratestatos* (*Rep.* 9, 589b1). In context, however, it is clear that this refers to the sovereignty of reason over spirit and appetite, the two lower parts of the soul. By the time of Aristotle and the early Hellenistic philosophers the psychological and ethical sense of *enkratēs* and *enkrateia* is so well established that the reflexive pronoun can be elided. The words on their own connote self-mastery. What began as

[5] I go a step further than Irwin 1979 who, in a note on Plato, *Gorg.* 491d4, says that 'though Socrates suggests that the many recognize the possibility of self-control, it is actually quite hard to find evidence of this view in pre-Platonic Greek'. Irwin's best example is Antiphon DK 87 B58 (also cited by Dodds in his commentary on *Gorg.*), where *sōphrosynē* is characterized as follows: ὅστις τοῦ θυμοῦ ταῖς παραχρῆμα ἡδοναῖς ἐμφράσσει αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν κρατεῖν τε καὶ νικᾶν ἠδυνήθη αὐτὸς ἑαυτόν. For all we know, Antiphon here may reflect the influence of Socrates' oral discourse.
[6] Note the very similar passage, *Rep.* 4, 430e, also an elucidation of *sōphrosynē*. Here, in support of analysing *sōphrosynē* as κόσμος τις and ἡδονῶν τινῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν ἐγκράτεια (cf. also *Symp.* 196c), Socrates invokes the expression κρείττω αὑτοῦ as one that is in popular use, and then pokes fun at it. The fun involves the difficulty of supposing that one and the same person can be both master and subject of himself. Plato surely makes so much of this point precisely because self-mastery was not a notion whose implications for the structure of the self were familiar in everyday discourse.
[7] North 1966, 118 ff., notes the importance of *enkrateia* for Xenophon's portrait of Socrates. At *Mem.* 1.5.5 Socrates proposes that it should be regarded as the foundation of *aretē*.

an artificial use of language has been naturalized by familiarity with its reference—a new view of persons as quasi-political entities. The concepts of authority, power, ruler and subject, stable government and insurrection have become ways of analysing the self.

The fertility of these notions in Plato's philosophy is so well known that we tend to think of them as his special outlook. Plato, however, is part of a creative process that began with Socrates and, as I will show, was continuing to develop in early Hellenistic philosophy. The seminal contribution of Socrates is evident not only from his decisive influence on Plato and Xenophon, but also from dominant characteristics of the other Socratic schools. Self-mastery is the keynote of the philosophies of Antisthenes, Diogenes, and even the hedonist Aristippus, whose most famous dictum was that he 'had' the courtesan Lais but was not 'had by' her.[8] For reasons already mentioned, it is less obtrusive in Aristotle; and he draws a technical distinction between *enkrateia* and *sōphrosynē*, which seems to be peculiar to himself (*EN* 7, 1151b32). Aristotle finds existing political systems and conventional values sufficiently authoritative to provide the main parameters of an educated moral sensibility. His even-handedness is one of the reasons why his ethics has worn so well, but it is not the kind of thing to excite the radical young.

That excitement, it is obvious, was what Socrates generated in Alcibiades and his other companions. Socrates could join in a symposium and be sober as a judge when everyone else was falling around. He could sleep with his arms around Alcibiades, and display no signs of sexual arousal. He could be tried on a capital charge, and exhibit himself as the most authoritative of all citizens. He appeared wise and claimed to be ignorant. In life and in philosophical conversation, he was a paradox, authoritatively subversive, a private citizen with a public mission, a man who went his own way.

To understand the popular impact of Hellenistic ethics, it is essential to see the leading figures as interpreters and embodiments of the Socratic paradigm. They will provide their audience, as Socrates had done, with reasons for cultivating a life that is admirable by some of the criteria of conventional

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[8] For the testimonia on this, cf. Giannantoni 1990, vol. 2, IVA 96. I am not suggesting that Aristippus had a use for the term *enkrateia* in its Socratic sense of mastering pleasures and passions. Xenophon's Socrates (*Mem.* 2.1.1–34) tries to persuade Aristippus that he needs to cultivate *enkrateia*, by arguing that the life of a ruler is superior to that of a subject. Aristippus nimbly sidesteps the argument by insisting that there is a third option, a life neither of rule nor of slavery, but of 'freedom', which is the best route to happiness. It is in virtue of this notion and his claim to be able 'always to make the best of circumstances' (DL 2.66) that we may credit Aristippus with an interest in autonomy or self-mastery.

morality, but convention, for convention's sake, will play no more part in their reasoning than it did in Socrates'. The ethical outlook the leading Hellenistic philosophers offer is radically unconventional in many of the attitudes it prescribes, and this radicalism is to be seen as a consequence of the technologies of the self that are central to their project. Hellenistic ethics transfers to the self traditional notions of leadership and political control. But, as I shall argue, we should not see this transference as merely an internalization of external authority, a metaphorical withdrawal from the external world and its power relations. The consequence of internal power over oneself is conceived as the foundation of supreme authority without qualification. Thus an Epicurean is promised divinity—'you will live like a god among men'—and the Stoic sage is the *only* king.[9]

PHILOSOPHICAL LEADERS AND SOCIETY

Hellenistic society was an age of kings, political and philosophical, temporal and spiritual. In this it differs from the era of Socrates. For our reflections on self-mastery and philosophical power in this later time, the institution and experience of monarchy is important, as it was perceived to be in the relationship between many kings and philosophers: Diogenes and Alexander, Pyrrho and Alexander, Zeno and Antigonus Gonatas, Sphaerus and Ptolemy Euergetes, Arcesilaus and Eumenes of Pergamum.

The daily lives of Hellenistic philosophers and their pupils are known to us only in crude outline. What do stand out in bold relief are some of the salient ways in which they captured the general attention of their world. I will focus first on Zeno.

It was precisely for *enkrateia* that Zeno became proverbial at Athens: the saying was 'more *enkratēs* than the philosopher Zeno' (DL 7.27), meaning that no one was, because he was the paradigm of self-mastery or empowerment.[10] Frugality, contentment with poverty, rejection of overtures from Antigonus Gonatas, detachment in social behaviour are just about

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[9] Epicurus makes this statement in his *Letter to Menoeceus* (DL 10.135). For the Stoics' claim, cf. *SVF* 3.332.

[10] Zeno's successor Cleanthes called the state of the soul which is displayed in the cardinal virtues 'strength and power' (ἰσχὺς καὶ κράτος), Plutarch, *St. rep.* 1034D (*SVF* 1.563), and in the same context listed as the first such virtue *enkrateia* (the field of which is 'steadfastness'), followed by courage, justice, and *sōphrosynē*. For a similarly prominent placing of *enkrateia*, cf. Chrysippus in *SVF* 3.297.

all that the biographical tradition offers by way of justification for this renown.[11] We know nothing about any tests of fortitude that Zeno passed with flying colours. Yet the tradition, some of it drawn from contemporary or near contemporary writers, is unanimous on his exemplary self-control and independence. The epigrammatist Antipater of Sidon wrote an epitaph on Zeno which reads: 'Here lies Zeno, dear to Citium, who reached Olympus, not by piling Pelion on Ossa nor performing the labours of Heracles. The path he found to the stars consisted in *sōphrosynē* alone' (DL 7.29). In another epigram, by Zenodotus (DL 7.30), Zeno is represented as someone with a civilizing mission to Greece and the founder of self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*), who gave up wealth, discovered a 'manly doctrine', and toiled at establishing a school that would be 'mother of fearless liberty'. 'He teaches poverty and gets disciples', was the comic poet Philemon's comment on what he calls Zeno's 'new-fangled philosophy' (DL 7.27). All three passages draw attention to Zeno's power, a power that consists in the advocacy and practice of a life indifferent to all conventional forms of dependence.

I turn next to the sceptic Pyrrho. In his case we have the eulogistic testimony of Timon, his chief disciple. Timon invites his readers to see Pyrrho as a paradigm of equipoise, set apart from 'the famed and unfamed alike, unstable bands of people, weighed down on this side and on that with passions, opinions and futile legislation' (LS 2B).[12] Pyrrho travels light. He acts 'so easily and calmly', and is so detached from other voices, that Timon likens him to the sun in his role as humanity's leader and luminary (LS 2D). Apart from Timon, the biographical tradition stresses Pyrrho's self-conscious cultivation of a mind-set that would make him as near as possible impervious to circumstances (LS 1A–C). He is said to have talked to himself as a way of practising to be virtuous; and a string of anecdotes is recorded concerning his ability to withstand pain and danger.

Similar stories about other contemporary philosophers abound in the tradition. Zeno's cult of poverty has precedents in the actions of the Cynic Crates, who gave up all his wealth (DL 6.87), and Stilpo of Megara (see below). A related phenomenon is conversion—the contrast between a lifestyle before and after association with a philosopher. We are asked to believe that Polemo, who became head of the Academy, was converted by Xenocrates from a

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[11] In characterizing Zeno as καρτερικώτατος and λιτότατος, DL 7.26 uses two terms that became common among historians for praising virtuous political leaders or peoples uncorrupted by luxury: cf. Diodorus Siculus 10.12.11, 37.2.31, 37.3.61.

[12] References of the form LS 2B are to Long and Sedley 1987.

dissolute way of life to a 'stubborn' consistency of character, so that he 'did not even turn pale when a mad dog bit him in the thigh' (DL 4.17). Apocryphal though many biographical anecdotes must be, in the case of the Hellenistic philosophers they largely derive from Antigonus of Carystus, who was close enough in date to his subject-matter to have appeared ridiculous if the general tenor of his biographies was fabrication. We have to believe, I think, that many philosophers led lives that seemed largely consistent with their theories, and that they did strike their audiences as men who had liberated themselves to a remarkable degree from conventional sources of anxiety.

From Epicurus there is the moving first-person testimony of his deathbed letter to Idomeneus (LS 24D):

I wrote this [note the past tense] to you on that blessed day of my life which was also the last. Strangury and dysentery had set in, with all the extreme intensity of which they are capable. But the joy in my soul at the memory of our past discussions was enough to counterbalance all this. I ask you, as befits your lifelong companionship with me and with philosophy: take care of the children of Metrodorus.

Hellenistic philosophy, it seems, was something that could deliver the happiness that it promised.

I have suggested that we look to the notion of self-mastery as a crucial element in its success. For Socrates this notion was predicated on a reconstruction of priorities as between the claims of reason and moral integrity, what Socrates called the 'health of the soul', and the demands of the body and material possessions. The Hellenistic philosophers inherit the same interest in reorientation, but in their case self-mastery and its rationale also involve a reconstitution of the socio-political world, something which Socrates left alone. I don't mean that Zeno or Epicurus or Pyrrho were participants in the political process, but that their non-involvement in it should be construed as an active stance of leadership or power-politics corresponding to the world-view of their own philosophies. Pyrrho, we are to take it, does not inhabit a world of determinate truth and ethical values, and so the way he cares for himself and presumably for others is decisively shaped by his doctrine of the indeterminacy of nature. Epicurus offers his garden as the symbol of an alternative society in which the social world is conceived as something constructed by friends for the pursuit of his philosophy, liberated from fear of death and the divine. Zeno lives in the public eye, but in a manner which displays his indifference to the conventional marks of success and his profound

satisfaction with what others would call asceticism. His followers, unlike those
of Socrates apparently, adopt the lifestyle of their mentor.

Modern anthropologists have accustomed us to think of selves and their
interests and needs as largely social constructs. It is clear that the Hellenistic
philosophers understood this notion inasmuch as Cynics, Epicureans, and
Stoics require their adherents to treat their pre-philosophical selves as sifted
out of dominant social values to the detriment of what human nature actually
requires of them. The schools' common emphasis on austerity and frugality
is not simply a recommendation to prune one's diet and give up unnecessary
luxuries, but an invitation to enter an alternative world and acquire a new self.
The happy and virtuous self that the Hellenistic philosophers seek to define
is at its most distant from ordinary attitudes and satisfactions in the area of
needs and motivations.

Once again, we find much common ground between the philosophical
options. A Pyrrhonian wise man, according to Timon, 'will not decline or
choose' (LS 2J), and Timon describes desire, *epithumia*, as 'the first of all
bad things' (LS 2I). Pyrrho's alternative world is one in which self-mastery is
achieved by discovering that there is no reason for saying 'I want'. In Stoicism,
epithumia is the mark of a person who mistakenly supposes that conventional
goods are what he needs in order to be happy; *lupē*, 'mental pain', denotes the
unjustified passion consequent on believing, again mistakenly, that you have
been deprived of some component of your happiness.[13] Ordinary psychology,
where these terms are at home as descriptions of normal experiences, is inver-
ted, for the purpose of a reconstructed self which will view the world with
eyes undiverted by passion. The Epicurean technology of the self retains a
non-pejorative use for *epithumia* and *lupē*. An Epicurean wise man has desires
and feels mental pain, but his desires are restricted to those which are 'nat-
ural and necessary' for his happiness. His character and attitude to past and
future are so constituted that he always achieves a preponderance of pleasure
over pain.[14] No less than the Stoic he is happy on the rack (LS 22Q), a thesis
already known to Aristotle, who calls it absurd (*EN* 7, 1153b19). Underly-
ing all three of these different philosophical selves is the notion that many
common desirables and deficiencies are merely conventional, with no basis in
human nature or an enlightened understanding of the world.

Several remarks are required if we are to evaluate these ethical strategies
in their historical situation. First, they are not advanced as take-it-or-leave-it

[13] See LS 65A–B.   [14] See LS 21B–C, F, I, T.

maxims, but as principles grounded in three carefully reasoned but quite discrepant views of 'nature'—non-teleological and non-theocentric in the case of the Epicureans, teleological and theocentric in the case of the Stoics, and radically indeterminate in the case of the Pyrrhonists. Their rationale is not a balanced assessment of conventional wisdom about the good life, but a constitution of that life according to the Epicurean, Zenonian, or Pyrrhonian view of the nature of things.

Secondly, they trade heavily on the notion of a perfectly 'wise' man. Every school, by this date, has its *sophos*, its paradigm of someone perfected in its own philosophy. Yet the Stoics, as was widely cited against them, withheld that title from any of their own leading philosophers. Christianity has familiarized us with the notion of unachievable imitation of a perfect model, but *imitatio Christi* must fall short for theological reasons that did not trouble Greek philosophers. Chrysippus characterized the Stoic sage as the equal of Zeus in virtue (LS 61J), and, as already mentioned, Epicurus advocated a praxis that would make someone live like a god among men. It was not piety that distanced the *sophos* as a practical possibility, but, as Pyrrho is nicely reported to have said, the difficulty of divesting oneself of being human (LS 1C).[15]

There is a deep paradox here, which brings me to a third point. Paradox was a fundamental part of Greek philosophy from its beginnings. Here again, Aristotle stands out by his difference. In taking over the term paradox, we have lost its connection with *doxa*, and so we tend to think of philosophical paradoxes as either mere puzzles or perversity. But a paradox is literally a thought that is incongruous with commonplace beliefs. Hence Parmenides' deduction of a world of truth totally at variance with mortal 'opinions' is, most literally, a paradox. Greek philosophers trade on paradox because the dialectical tradition, via its Eleatic origins, trained them to think in terms of a dichotomy between conventional opinion and unascertained truth. On this way of looking at things, the world is up for grabs, so to speak. Our beliefs should be grounded, based on reasons, and mere convention is not a sufficient reason for belief. The fruitfulness of this standpoint for the development of Greek speculative thought is self-evident. Interpreters of Greek ethics, in spite of the so-called Socratic and Stoic paradoxes, have yet, I think, to take its full measure. Plato's *Republic* is a gigantic paradox in the Greek

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[15] Cf. Chrysippus, LS 66A: 'For this reason, then, owing to the extreme magnitude and beauty [of justice], we seem to be talking fiction and not on the level of humanity and human nature.'

sense that I have explained. The ethical and political writings of Aristotle are not.

I suggest that we are intended to view many of the ethical strategies of the innovative Hellenistic philosophers as paradoxical, in the sense that they are designed to challenge and intrigue and undermine complacency. We have yet to see what aspects of traditional thought their ethical discourse leaves intact, but defence of it is clearly less their concern than following the argument wherever it takes them.

The fourth point I want to make about the general tenor of Hellenistic ethics brings me back to the notion of power and Hellenistic monarchy. On the whole, as I have already suggested, it is correct to see Hellenistic ethics as a development of Socratic tendencies, rather than a direct response to supposedly new problems and situations. It does seem probable, however, that the concentration of power in the hands of Hellenistic monarchs and generals, together with the vicissitudes these figures experienced, helped to give currency to the notion of a related yet strikingly different paradigm—a self that is authoritative and utterly consistent in all circumstances—and whose power consists in an inversion of monarchical appurtenances, minimal possessions, minimal material needs, hierarchical subordination of conventional interests to a controlling rational outlook, and adaptability. Thus we may place Stilpo of Megara's response to Demetrius, son of Antigonus, when he wished to restore Stilpo's plundered property: 'I have lost nothing that belonged to me, since no one has removed my education, and I still have my reason and understanding' (DL 2.115).[16]

The response is theatrical, and a fifth point is in order here. By the time of Roman Stoicism, the term *prosōpon*, 'role', had become a way of designating a person's character and the 'performance' expected of one. Epictetus makes it clear that a character in this sense is something that is partly determined by circumstances—one's role as a son, a citizen, and so on—but still more importantly, by one's choices and understanding of 'who one is' (cf. *Diss*. 1.2, 2.10).[17] Epictetus had a clear forerunner in Panaetius' celebrated theory of each person's four *personae* (known to us through Cicero's report in *Off*. 1.107–17), but there can be little doubt that the theatrical

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[16] One may compare Alexander the Great's supposed contacts with the Cynic Diogenes, and the probably fictional exchange of letters between Antigonus Gonatas and Zeno (DL 7.7–9). For more on Stilpo, see Chapter 4 of this volume, pp. 76–9.

[17] See Chapter 18 of this volume, p. 386.

image goes back to the early days of the Stoa. Zeno's independent-minded follower Aristo described the wise man as 'like the good actor who, whether he puts on the mask of Thersites or Agamemnon, plays either part in the proper way' (LS 58G); and Antigonus Gonatas is said to have lamented the 'staging' (*theatron*) of which he had been deprived by Zeno's death (DL 7.15). Epicurus made love of theatre an attribute of his wise man (LS 25H). Philosophers were frequently mocked as mere 'performers', and the fact that the profession could be abused by cultivation of its trappings does not imply that its serious practitioners avoided theatricality. The subject deserves detailed scrutiny, but here I focus on just one aspect.

Zeno and other Hellenistic philosophers were theatrical in the sense that they intended their lives to be seen as highly self-conscious choices of a determinate role. Living the part was, of course, demanded by consistency with their doctrines, especially doctrines specifying strenuous routes to happiness. Leaving aside the competitive features of publicly conducted dialectic and the exhibitionism proper to any effective lecturer, theatricality made the point that a way of life could be quite deliberately chosen and cultivated—that it need not be an old suit of clothes which had to be worn because nothing else was available. The notion of self-mastery, which I have emphasized so strongly, presupposes just such a self-conscious choice of a life, an understanding of who one is, as Epictetus remarked.

COMPARISONS WITH POPULAR MORALITY

Although the Hellenistic philosophers share a common view on the link between happiness, excellence, and self-mastery, and agree on much that these require in the sphere of practical reason and desire, they remain, as I began by saying, quite distinct sects. A choice between Stoicism or Epicureanism involves fundamental decisions about one's whole orientation—one's theology, cosmology, and daily practice. The power that each of these philosophies promises is not a simple recipe for personal autonomy but a radically distinctive way of understanding where one is positioned in the world.

This systematic and comprehensive outlook distinguishes Stoicism and Epicureanism from the ephemeral philosophies of life that sprang up around the same time. It also, of course, distinguishes them from popular morality. We can, however, learn something about the philosophical options in ethics by noticing attitudes they share, or fail to share, with sentiments voiced in the comedies of Menander.

Contrary to what is sometimes said, Menander's theatre seems to me to show little respect for philosophy. It is high-grade soap opera, where conventional people get into and out of messes generated by stereotypical attitudes to wealth, inheritance, sex, and the like. Knemon in *Dyskolus* is a rare case of someone who has chosen and stuck to an eccentric lifestyle through misanthropy that has a philosophical resonance. Remarking on his mistake at treating himself as 'self-sufficient' (*autarkēs*, 713–14) — a sure dig at contemporary philosophy — he adds, wryly, that if everyone had lived like him there would be no more lawcourts or prisons or wars. We are reminded of Zeno's austere *Republic* (cf. DL 7.32–3).

More typical is the slave Daos' comment on Chairestratos' depression in *Aspis* 336 ff.: 'Practically all ailments stem from anguish (*lupē*); and I know you have a peevish and melancholic nature. The next thing will be getting a doctor here — a philosophical one who says the trouble is pleuritis or phrenitis.' Though Menander follows the general run of Greek comedy in mocking philosophy, he also provides a rich stock of the moralizing platitudes that people did, presumably, exchange in daily life. The sample I draw from consists of maxims isolated from their dramatic context. Even so, they show that popular morality was in touch with certain key sentiments of one or other Hellenistic philosophy.

First, some examples that dwell on the authority of reason.[18] 'Reason is the sole manager of mortals' life' (438); 'Reason conquers present misfortune' (515); 'Every virtue is commanded by holy reason' (69); 'Let reason be the leader of every political office' (68); 'Conquer passion by reasoning well' (528). All Greek philosophers would endorse these viewpoints, but one is particularly reminded of the Stoics who chose the military term *hēgemonikon*, 'commanding faculty', for the mind.

Next, a representative selection of sentences that focus upon pleasure or mental pain (*lupē*). 'No mortal's life is free from pain' (65); 'No evil is worse for men than pain' (563); 'To live free from pain is the pleasantest life' (749), a statement which could come straight out of Epicurus, as could the following also: 'Flee pleasure that brings later damage' (806) and 'How much pain we suffer on account of pleasures' (863). 'Never make yourself a slave to pleasure' (512) and 'The prudent man is not caught by pleasure' (777) endorse the standard philosophical line on the disparity between self-mastery and self-indulgence.

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[18] My citations from Menander, unless a play is specified, are taken from Jaekel 1964.

Other lines recommend the value of education, the superiority of virtue to wealth, the incomparable worth of the soul, and so forth.[19] Yet anti-philosophical sentiments are hardly less common: for instance, 'Human affairs are chance, not good planning' (*Aspis* 410); 'No one lives the life that he chooses' (105); 'Some people do well who think badly' (236); 'There is no one who does not reproach fortune' (611); 'The wise man does not seem to be well adapted in all respects' (589); and 'No man will succeed in being completely happy' (588). In general, then, there are interesting echoes of philosophical ethics in Menander, approving and disapproving. Superficial and undeveloped though they are, they show that philosophers such as Zeno and Epicurus could have counted on some support, and some interesting opposition, for their systematic views in the untutored opinions of their audience.

Collectively too they show the uncertainty and confusion of popular ethics in the Hellenistic world, and thus its distance from philosophy. Aristotle had made a similar point in his own ethics, noting the discrepancy between the opinions of the 'many' and the 'wise' on what happiness is, and adding: '[of the many] the same person keeps changing his mind, since in sickness he thinks it is health, in poverty wealth' (*EN* 1, 1095a20–25). This reactive, circumstantial view of happiness was rejected by all Greek philosophers, but by none more strongly than the Hellenistic pioneers who have concerned us in this chapter. They were disposed not simply to minimize external fortune's control over a person's state of mind, but to specify a consistent attitude that could insure happiness against internal threats to its stability, such as the attitudes described as Epicurean 'untroubledness' (*ataraxia*) or Stoic 'good flow of life' (*euroia biou*). Neither attitude will satisfy someone who identifies happiness with everything that is prized in popular morality. But such a person, an Epicurean or a Stoic will say, has failed to see that you cannot simultaneously be a hedonist and someone who regards the perfection of reason and obedience to moral norms as the sole human good. The mutual exclusivity of these ethical theories is an inevitable consequence of each system's attachment to its own internal consistency and allocation of fundamental priorities. Stoics think that their ethics would be totally undermined if pleasure or health or anything other than the virtues were deemed 'good' and a necessary constituent of happiness (DL 7.101–3 = LS 58A). The Epicurean Diogenes of Oenoanda 'affirms now and always, with a great shout, that for all Greeks and foreigners pleasure is the goal of life . . . and the virtues but the means to the goal' (LS 21P).

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[19] Cf. Jaekel 1964, nos. 2, 50, 124, 384, 436, 565, 684, 843.

Such insistence upon doctrinal integrity, as I began by saying, is essential to the conception of the Hellenistic schools as distinct 'sects' or *haireseis*. This nomenclature also advertises their *practical* significance, as a striking example will show. Dionysius of Heraclea, originally a follower of Zeno, got the name 'turncoat' because in later life he suffered from pain so severely that he was unable to sustain the doctrine that pain is quite indifferent for happiness (DL 7.166), and abandoned the Stoa for the Cyrenaics (or possibly the Epicureans). Dionysius' apostasy marks him out as a failed Stoic, but also as someone who takes consistency so seriously that he expects his own experience to be adequately validated by the school of his allegiance.

On one way of understanding the human situation, values and the quality of a life are not things that we choose but predetermined social and psychological contexts in which we locate ourselves, as best we may, along such lines as these: I am in pain, therefore I am unhappy; I have won a lottery, therefore I am happy; you have injured me, therefore I will injure you. To illustrate that outlook, we have a good example at the beginning of Menander's *Aspis* (1–18), where the slave Daos says he had expected that his master Kleostratos would return from war famous and hale, with prospects of a great future consisting in an elegant lifestyle, a title, and a fine marriage for his sister. But Kleostratos has been 'snatched away' *paralogōs*, 'unreasonably' cheating Daos' expectations.

The big idea of Hellenistic ethics is the unreasonableness of assuming that such expectations could have any bearing on long-term happiness and excellence. For these, it proposes, you have to make an exclusive choice between systematic attitudes—Stoicism or Epicureanism, let us say—either one of which constitutes virtually a whole culture to itself. Try to imagine a single affiliation incorporating your political party, religion, form of therapy, cosmology, psychology, and fundamental values, an affiliation which unified all that might be involved in being, for instance, a Christian, Jungian, socialist, utilitarian, and believer in evolution and the Big Bang. Then you have a loose analogy to one of the leading Hellenistic schools in their most challenging phase and the reason for thinking of them as experiments in philosophical power.

POSTSCRIPT

The proceedings of the conference at which I first presented this study (Green 1993) include the response of Paul Woodruff, my commentator, and an edited

selection of the ensuing discussion by other conference members. There was general agreement to my proposal that Socrates gave Hellenistic ethics much of its flavour and its ideal of a life in control of itself, but Woodruff and other speakers asked me to expand my treatment of these points and also to consider further features distinctive of the Hellenistic schools.

By emphasizing, as I do, the Socratic legacy of self-mastery, I may give the impression that *sōphrosynē* and *enkrateia* were central ideas not only for Zeno but also for Pyrrho and Epicurus. In fact, there is no evidence that associates these precise words with either of these other philosophers. Their ideal was complete *ataraxia*, 'untroubledness'. Making this point, Woodruff (1993, 161) observes that *ataraxia* is 'not quite the same as self-mastery', but the different concept of 'an idealized nature, that does not require one to learn 'to master one's own character'. Rather than referring to Socrates as the source of this ideal, Woodruff proposes that Epicurus 'may well have learned' it from Pyrrho (cf. DL 9.64), who is said to have encountered it in India (DL 9.61).

I don't in the least discount these testimonies for Pyrrho and Epicurus; and I should have refined my discussion of self-mastery by asking about its relation to *ataraxia*. In differentiating the two conditions, Woodruff (like Aristotle, *EN* 7.9) wants to distinguish between experiencing but mastering certain impulses, on the one hand, and having a mind-set so wonderfully well adjusted that one doesn't even have them. I agree that these are distinct dispositions, and I grant that my discussion of self-mastery may seem to conflate them or to wobble between them. However, setting terminology aside, there can be no doubt that all three Hellenistic movements posit an ideal of tranquillity, for the attainment of which the essential condition is rational control of one's desires. Thus the Stoics standardly define *enkrateia* as 'a steadfast disposition' (cf. *SVF* 3.265); and although the word is not attested for Epicurus himself, there is good evidence that Epicureans emphasized the concept of self-mastery in Woodruff's sense (see *Sent. Vat.* 21, fr. 74 Bailey, and the discussion of *temperantia* by Cicero, *Fin.* 1.47–8).

With more space at my disposal, I would have said more about the historical and intellectual context of the Hellenistic schools, and here too Woodruff makes points that throw further light on the special character of Hellenistic ethics and on my initial question about our modern use of such words as *stoical*. As he writes (1993, 157–8):

Ethics as developed by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle was in the service of political theory; Hellenistic ethics was not.... In the classical tradition from Socrates to

Aristotle, ethics states the goals of politics, and politics states the conditions under which the good life as described in ethics is possible . . . . The new political climate of the period [i.e. the rise of monarchies and the decline of the polis] forced Hellenistic ethics to be detached from politics, and this meant two things. First, the theories of Hellenistic ethics were more abstract than those of their classical predecessors. Teachers of Hellenistic ethics did not much care whether their goals were practical in view of the conditions under which people lived. Concrete social and political issues did not interest them. In particular, they did not ask whether better politics would make the good life easier to live. Second, Hellenistic ethics puts enormously increased emphasis on individual choice as opposed to public policy; hence the importance of *hairesis*.

Woodruff is quite right to note the detachment of Hellenistic ethics from theorizing, as Aristotle does in his *Politics*, about the merits of different political systems and their practical implementation. Yet, if we understand political theory in a broader sense (and we should also not forget Zeno's utopian *Republic*), Hellenistic ethics, especially in the case of Stoicism, seems to me much more politically charged than Woodruff implies, as we can discern from that school's enormous impact on Cicero's *De republica*, *De legibus*, and *De officiis*. (For a finely balanced treatment of Epicurean and Stoic political thought, see Schofield 2000.)

Woodruff reminds us that what we call Hellenistic philosophy underwent significant transformations when it was imported to Rome. That development falls outside the brief I set myself, but Woodruff may be right to suspect that 'our modern use of such words as *stoical* and *cynical* owes more to Roman than to Hellenistic usage', with the words in the less rigorous Roman context losing 'their hard-edged technical meanings'. What largely prompts Woodruff to say this is the following suggestion he makes about what he finds most distinctive about Hellenistic ethics (1993, 161–2):

the amazingly academic character of each of the schools after their foundation and before the Roman period. Hellenistic ethics, like the rest of Hellenistic philosophy, was mainly self-generating. It grew out of a prolonged and highly technical debate among the schools. This is not to deny that its practitioners lived in accordance with their beliefs. But, as professional philosophers, many of them were concerned with fine points that could not have made a difference in ordinary life.

The critical words here are 'the schools after their foundation'. Woodruff seems especially to be thinking of debates between the later Stoics and the sceptical Academics. While I agree that these debates covered numerous technical points, the focus of my study is on the primary goals of the founding fathers—Zeno,

Epicurus, and Pyrrho. I acknowledge their emphasis on 'carefully reasoned . . . views of nature', but the conception of philosophy that underpinned this inquiry was, in Epicurus' words, 'an activity which by arguments and discussion brings about the happy life' (LS 25K). Hence, as Woodruff fully approves, the propriety of my calling the Hellenistic schools 'experiments in philosophical power'.

For an excellent study of how Zeno and Epicurus were perceived, and how they sought to be perceived, by their contemporaries, see Decleva Caizzi 1993. She emphasizes, as I do, the Socratic influence on general images of a philosophical life; but, whereas I am partly concerned with what the competing schools have in common, Decleva Caizzi focuses on differences of lifestyle between Zeno and Epicurus, which, she convincingly argues, reflect salient differences in their detailed specifications of the route to happiness. In Long 1999*a* I give a more extensive treatment of the Socratic presence in Greek ethics, focusing on the Cynics, Cyrenaics, and Hellenistic scepticism.

2

Hellenistic ethics as the art of life

We have an extraordinarily rich resource in the Graeco-Roman legacy of moral philosophy. That tradition, starting with Socrates and the sophists, then moving on into Plato, Aristotle, Epicureanism, and Stoicism, is one of the liveliest subjects of study and debate in the modern humanities curriculum. Its diffused influence on later moral thought is evident in philosophers as different as Hobbes, Spinoza, Descartes, Locke, Butler, Kant, Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick, Hare, MacIntyre, and Williams.

Yet, as the last two scholars have done much to remind us, our contemporary western context is radically different from Graeco-Roman antiquity.[1] Modern ethics, to a much greater extent than philosophers often acknowledge, has been indelibly shaped by the Judaeo-Christian tradition and by progressivist social policy; hence the tendency, quite foreign to Graeco-Roman ethics, to construe the demands of morality as potentially in conflict with one's own immediate or long-term interest, and even to define morality itself as an obligatory concern for other persons' needs as distinct from one's own good. Greek ethics, speaking broadly, makes the virtue of justice central to a good life, and it recognizes the good person's willingness to give up his or her life for a friend or for a principle. Yet it never envisions the performance of unqualifiedly self-sacrificial acts or acts that are completely contrary to one's interest, if that interest is properly understood. The ideal agent of ancient ethics is characterized by virtues that allow no space for conflict to arise between commitment to the good of others and commitment to the good of oneself.

[1] See MacIntyre 1981 and Williams 1985.

Apart from this Judaeo-Christian legacy and progressivist social policy, in studying Greek ethics we need to forget entirely about inalienable human rights, utilitarianism construed as maximizing the material welfare of society, or a requirement to abstract from one's own person in construing obligations. In other words, any contemporary value we may discover in ancient ethics needs to be qualified at the outset by acknowledging that we ourselves inhabit a world that cannot and should not, for historical and for moral and liberal reasons, be simply invited to return to the philosophical ethics of Greece or Rome.

This enormous difference of context is difficult to appreciate because we have inherited from the ancients not only powerful ethical systems but also numerous terms which, when translated, are still central components of ethical theory. These terms include (to be selective): good(s), virtue, desire and motivation, happiness and pleasure, practical reason, deliberation, volition, sentiments or feelings, choice, character, self-control, consistency, and even terms translatable as duty, good will, integrity, autonomy, right action, and moral rules. In Stoicism, which is the ancient philosophy most broadly influential on later ethics, concepts picked out by these terms are prominent constituents of the theory and its application in the works of Seneca and Epictetus. Julia Annas, in the conclusion of her fine book *The Morality of Happiness* (1993, 452), proposes that 'the ancient theories'—and she means particularly Stoicism—'are theories of morality (in any intuitive understanding of morality), in the same sense that Kant's and Mill's theories are'. Yet, as she also correctly goes on to observe, the ancient and modern come apart if one agrees with Bernard Williams that the modern concept of morality is essentially one of obligation.[2]

It is certainly the case, in my opinion, that the ancients had neither a concept of morality as a special domain of the right, that is, obligatory value, nor a concept of the moral good as something completely *sui generis* and divorced from goodness meaning utility for the agent. While I have great respect for the internal coherence and enlightenment of Stoic ethics, I also think, as I have argued elsewhere, that such notorious Stoic claims as the possibility of complete happiness and goodness under the most adverse external conditions make sense if and only if one endorses Stoic

[2] See Williams 1985, 32, where he claims that the Greeks were 'very fortunate in not having arrived at the distinctive preoccupations of the system *morality*, with its emphasis on a very special notion of obligation'. Julia Annas has told me in correspondence that she rejects this as a proper characterization of modern morality. I make no further comment on this complex issue.

theology, with its rigorously deterministic and providential axioms.[3] Without those postulates—which few reflective people today will wholeheartedly endorse—I don't think we have good reason to become fully fledged Stoics. Nor are we likely to be persuaded by such Stoic paradoxes as the absence of degrees of virtue and vice, or by the project of trying to achieve infallible moral knowledge.

In this chapter, then, I shall not make a case for a twenty-first-century neo-Stoicism or for a return to any ancient ethical system as such. What I want to do, rather, is to focus on the idea of philosophy as the art of life, studying the foundations and implications of this idea, with a view to asking whether some version of it can still be useful to ethics. We can trace the embryo of this idea back to Socrates and the sophists, but its full and explicit development only began with the founding fathers of Stoicism in the third century BC.[4] However, the idea is also implicit in Epicureanism; and it became widespread in later antiquity when it was contested by Sceptics.[5] In my discussion I will incorporate the Epicureans as well as the Stoics, because both schools, in spite of their obvious divergences and rivalry, share many similarities in their basic assumptions and in what they promise their adherents. That common ground helps us to understand the ancient appeal of both systems, while their divergences show that an art of life was taken to involve a totally consistent self-orientation, mediated by one's choice of system.

The 'art of life' idea has not entirely disappeared; for we invoke it inadvertently when we describe a person's response to some situation, generally one that would trouble most people, as being 'philosophical'. Yet, university departments of philosophy do not generally include the art of life in their ethical curriculum. Why not? To that big question this paper may offer some answers. But, because the concept of a philosophical art of life, in its ancient context, is complex and, to my mind, very intriguing, I shall refer only sporadically to modern ethics.

There is no question, I take it, that with the decline of Christianity, with market capitalism and consumerism the western world's dominant ideology, the instability of much family life, problems presented by such issues as

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[3] See Long 1989. Becker 1998 is a powerful and imaginative study of what a new or modern Stoicism could look like.

[4] For representative Stoic texts and discussion, see Bett 1997, 185–6.

[5] See Bett 1997, 186–7, who refers to Cicero, *Fin*. 3.4, where philosophy as such is called *ars vitae*. For Sextus Empiricus' criticisms, see *M*. 11.168–215.

globalization, immigration, the disparities of western affluence compared with much of the larger world, terrorist threats, availability of lethal drugs, and AIDS, many persons (especially the young) feel insecure and lost. Therapy sessions, self-help books, cultivating a beautiful body, and eastern meditation—these are some of the ways modern westerners look for guidance or comfort in living their lives apart from responding to media pressures and amusing themselves outside work. They do not look to modern academic philosophy; for that discipline hardly addresses questions about the meaning of life or the art of living or how to give shape and purpose to one's life as a whole. It is too difficult, too abstract, and too remote from the everyday concerns that people have.

Contrast the impulses that led Epicurus and Zeno to establish the Garden and the Stoa as new philosophical schools at Athens at the end of the fourth century BC. What primarily inspired them and what promoted their educational success was an intensely practical agenda. Epicurus said: 'Empty are the words of that philosopher who offers no therapy for human suffering of the soul.'[6] Zeno, an equally charismatic teacher, won fame because he exemplified in his life as well as his teaching a commitment to self-mastery, consistency of character, and independence from conventional ideas of happiness based on chance and material success.[7]

These two great figures were not the first Greeks to teach practical ethics. Like Plato and Aristotle, they were powerfully influenced by the life and philosophy of Socrates, whom the Stoics took as the best actual paradigm of their own ideals. Moreover, some central concepts of Hellenistic ethics, especially the ideas of an ultimate goal of life and of practical wisdom as essential to happiness, were fully charted by Aristotle and possibly inherited from him. Yet, historians are correct in finding something fundamentally new in the style and goals of what we call Hellenistic philosophy. What was that?

I think it is most aptly summed up in Michel Foucault's fine expression, 'technology of the self'.[8] Zeno and Epicurus don't start their ethical thought, as Aristotle does, by reviewing and systematizing established ideas about human aspirations and conceptions of a flourishing life in a Greek polis. Many of Aristotle's ethical and political concepts are 'thick' ones, deeply embedded in a network of such beliefs as the natural superiority of male to female, the right of the free male to rule over natural slaves, and the indignity

[6] Quoted by Porphyry, *Ad Marcellam* 31 = Usener 221, and LS 25C.
[7] On these aspects of Zeno, see Decleva Caizzi 1993 and this volume, Chapter 1, pp. 10–13.
[8] See Foucault 1988.

of manual work and business activity. Moreover, such Aristotelian virtues as generosity, liberality, and magnificence are accessible only to a male elite. The self that Aristotle is addressing is presumed to be already acculturated to an acceptance of these beliefs and values. Very importantly too, Aristotle resists the idea that practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) has the status of a scientific expertise or a *technē*.[9] His ethics presupposes persons who already have the benefits of being well brought up in a Greek polis. It also presupposes the intuitively plausible assumption that human happiness is partly dependent on chance or favourable external conditions.

Not so Zeno and Epicurus. These philosophers propose that we do not *have to* confront a reality or value system already granulated or modulated independent of our own input. With the help of philosophy, we can work on ourselves, like a craftsman. It is up to us to decide, on the basis of rational reflection, what the world is like; and to decide who we are, what matters to us, what value and description we are going to give to our experience; to decide (and this is the boldest claim) what we want, and not regard ourselves as the passive recipient of desires, media pressures, or as the victims of other people's exploitation. The Hellenistic art of life makes the remarkable proposal that genuine happiness depends on our making the most *skilful* use of ourselves and the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Unlike Aristotle, Zeno and Epicurus start their reflections on a good human life by asking questions about the pre-cultural nature and psychological constitution of all normal human beings. With what motivations and potentialities are we endowed as neonates? What are we to imagine ourselves like as bare selves, so to speak, before culture and contemporary ideology began to shape us?[10]

One effect of this methodology is to give the starting point of Hellenistic ethics an unrestrictedly universalist scope. The bare self is anyone's self, irrespective of gender, status, ethnicity, or chronology. Hence, as I observed in the last chapter, the terms Stoic and Epicurean are still available to us to describe someone's self-orientation, while Platonic or Aristotelian are not.

A second effect of the methodology is to make the ethical project radically revisionary. By starting from the pre-cultural self, Stoics and Epicureans give themselves the space to ask what we can and should make of ourselves if we let our basic human nature rather than conventional ideology take charge of our values and human development. The idea is that an understanding of this

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[9] See *EN* 6.5. [10] See Brunschwig 1986.

nature can and should serve as the technologist of the self, shaping our innate potentialities in more life-enhancing ways than cultural norms themselves offer to us. This is not a project of making one's life into an art-work—an aestheticizing of the self such as some find in Nietzsche; it is the idea of using the *art* of philosophy to make one's life into a well planned and well structured performance—a good life precisely because it has the form of a skilfully constructed and effective artefact. These arts of life presume that the culture in which we find ourselves is seriously flawed and actually encouraging us to neglect a life in agreement with our nature.

At this point modern philosophers and anthropologists will jump in and tell us that the very idea of a pre-cultural self or a basic and universal human nature is vacuous. Well, they had better not jump in too fast. What Stoics and Epicureans propose here is hardly possible to deny on empirical grounds. Desire for pleasure and avoidance of pain are, as the Epicureans maintained, instinctual drives, and hence basic to our human nature. It seems equally correct to say, with the Stoics, that we are born with impulses both for self-love and self-preservation and also for sociability.[11] Both schools are also correct, as it seems to me, in treating rationality as a normal and essential human property, meaning minimally linguistic consciousness, a capacity for means/end decision-making, calculation of consequences, and some capacity and desire to understand the world. These are ethical theories grounded in testable psychological findings. Moreover, they actually presuppose the modern anthropological axiom that adult selves are constructed and not simply given to us *ab initio*.

Turning now to technology, these schools propose that in virtue of our basic human nature, once this is properly understood, we have all the equipment we need as the foundation for giving excellent shape to our lives—shaping them not simply or even primarily for interpersonal or restrictedly *moral* situations but in order to live well at all moments, private or solitary as well as public and socially interactive. We are not, of course, being asked to live outside a culture, an already organized human environment. Rather, the proposal is that the Stoic or Epicurean technology of the self is available to us and should become our entire culture because it is adaptable to *any* actual culture. Apart from the basic material necessities of life for health

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[11] For basic texts reporting the Epicurean and Stoic positions, see for Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* (DL 10.129) and Cicero, *Fin.* 1.29–30; and for Stoicism, Cicero *Fin.* 3.16–17, 62–3.

and survival and the guidance offered by philosophy itself, we do not need further additives from the environment, or at least additives that we are not equipped to provide for ourselves except at the limits imposed by illness or external coercion. These philosophies are supposed to equip us to become self-sufficient and well-functioning persons for all seasons.

Values that we can call ethical in a modern sense—virtues of character, including justice, respect for other persons, and performance of socially appropriate roles—such values are strongly incorporated and justified in these philosophies, especially Stoicism;[12] but they are not recommended on the basis of a priori postulates, intuition, or morality and obligatoriness as such. The virtues find their place in Stoic and Epicurean ethics through reflection on what rational persons will find requisite to the best possible adult life guided by their understanding of their essential human nature. Requisite or necessary or essential—these are modal terms, but the modality is not deontological. Rather, to coin a Greek-based word, we could call it 'chreontological'—what is factually required of us in order to live well.

We are familiar, of course, with the idea that all Greek ethical theory is eudaimonistic, meaning that it posits a final end or ultimate and entirely intrinsic goodness as the goal or target of individual human existence. Hellenistic technologies of the self are philosophical strategies for trying to achieve this goal. The conventional English translation of *eudaimonia* is happiness. That translation is sometimes challenged because happiness, as we generally use the word today, refers to momentary moods and pleasurable consciousness, whereas Epicureans as well as Stoics provocatively said that a person perfected in their philosophies would be *eudaimōn* even if subjected to extreme torture, a claim that Aristotle already found absurd.[13] Certainly, *eudaimonia* is not a mere feeling or temporary state of consciousness; but it is a mistake, in my opinion, to explain it in purely objective terms as signifying an admirable life from an outward perspective. *Eudaimonia is* objective, in the sense that someone having it or aiming at is taken to be focused upon what is factually best for human beings. But it is also and essentially subjective: the *eudaimōn* person is someone whose life, from his or her own perspective, is complete, not short of anything they could reasonably desire, and whose long-term consciousness is both emotionally stable and even joyous.

[12] See the texts translated and discussed in LS chs. 21–2, 59–61.
[13] For Epicureans, see DL 10.118, for Stoics *SVF* 3.585–6, and for Aristotle, *EN* 7, 1153b19.

I have been writing thus far as if Stoicism and Epicureanism are fundamentally similar as technologies of the self. In fact, of course, they differ radically in what they propose as the precise content of happiness, and I want to say something about the divergent 'choices' that gave the rival schools the name *haireseis*. But I shall also treat the two schools together for a while, in order to elucidate the basic structure of their arts of life and their shared differences from modern 'morality'.

In positing, as they do, a *natural* good for human beings, these philosophies cut through the notorious fact/value distinction, which has been so influential in modern ethics. The work that 'natural' does in the Hellenistic concept of a natural goodness is to identify the constituents of the supreme value, happiness, with something that 'belongs' to us in virtue of the way we are factually constituted: everyone naturally seeks happiness, but without the guidance of philosophical reason they are prone to seek it in things that do not *belong to* their innate and properly mature natures.

Thus the Epicureans claim that their specification of the *telos* as *ataraxia*, which I am tempted to translate very freely by 'enlightenment', requires us to pursue only such instrumental goods—pleasure sources—as are necessary to us because of our natural needs.[14] There is nothing inherently right or obligatory about *ataraxia*; we desire it because of our psychological constitution. Morality enters the theory as the second step. To secure our natural goal we need friends, mutual benevolence, and virtues of character that dispose us to act only in ways that are consistent with a trouble-free consciousness or enlightenment.[15]

In Stoicism the concept of what naturally 'belongs' to us is more complex. The Stoics agree with the Epicureans that it must be identified by reflection on our basic impulses and human constitution. However, they disagree with the Epicureans over what such reflection delivers. According to the Stoics, what naturally belongs to a mature human constitution is not a hedonistic calculus, designed to promote a preponderance of pleasure over pain, but the perfection of our distinctively human nature, our god-given rationality.[16] Because as individuals we share a rational constitution with other human beings, and because we are naturally disposed to bond with them, the

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[14] See Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* (DL 10.127–32) and *KD* 29 (DL 10.149). These texts are included in LS as 21B and 21I.

[15] See Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* (DL 10.132 = LS 21B sec. 6), Cicero, *Fin.* 1.66–70 = LS 22O.

[16] See DL 7.85–6 = LS 57A.

Stoics conclude that anyone's achievement of virtue or rational perfection is inherently advantageous to all virtuous persons.[17] The primary motivation, as with Epicureanism, is the achievement of one's own good/happiness, but the virtues that form this good generate actions that are also right and beneficial per se in every social context.

In light of their divergent identifications of the natural human good, the two philosophies arrive at divergent evaluations of the value one of their practitioners will assign to pleasure, rationality, and virtue. Thus, rationality and virtue are only instrumental goods for the Epicureans, instrumental to the achievement of *ataraxia*. In Stoicism, by contrast, virtue itself is identified with the perfection of rationality and hence becomes identical to the human good as such; everything else including pleasure, with the exception of badness (equivalent to irrationality), is demoted to the status of 'indifference', that is, neither good nor bad. Yet in spite of these fundamental divergences, both philosophies have much in common when we view them as technologies of the self.

Apart from their naturalistic and universalist foundations, which I have already discussed, they share the following six presuppositions: in order to flourish as human beings, we require: (*a*) criteria for action that are systematically anchored to our long-term objective; (*b*) a system of values that is plausible experientially; (*c*) a comprehensive world-view, or theory of how human beings fit into the world as a whole; (*d*) a system of values that makes minimal demands on the state of the world in which we happen to find ourselves; (*e*), as a corollary of (*d*), total commitment to the proposition that happiness depends largely or entirely on our individual characters, mentalities, and rational plans of life. Finally, (*f*), they ask us to regard failure to achieve happiness as the result of motivations, emotions, and actions that are incompatible with the concept of an obtainable good that belongs to us by nature.

I now take up these points in some detail.

Criteria for action that are systematically anchored to our long-term objective. Both Stoic and Epicurean ethics are rule-based systems, in the sense that they offer general criteria (though ones that admit of exceptions or special circumstances) for deciding what to do. These include in Stoicism the distinction between 'preferred and dispreferred indifferents', for example, opting for health and wealth in preference to sickness and poverty;[18] and in Epicureanism, accepting short-term pains for the sake of long-term pleasures.

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[17] See Stobaeus 2.101, 21–102, 3 Wachsmuth = LS 60P.
[18] For basic texts and discussion, see LS ch. 58.

What grounds such rules, however, is the eudaimonistic objective specified in each theory and the theory's appeal to good reasoning.

A system of values that is plausible experientially. Here, it may seem, the Epicureans do much better than the Stoics by opting for moderate hedonism rather than perfection of reason and indifference of external goods. But rather than discussing that obvious point, I am more interested in the basic and shared idea of grounding ethics in an appeal to experience and desire for a fully satisfying personal life as distinct from abstract deontological principles or categorical imperatives. These arts of life invite us to find their proposals appealing by the test of their fittingness to our interests in long-term happiness and living well overall. On reflection, we shall presumably find one of them more appealing than the other. But while you cannot, in antiquity, combine Stoicism with Epicureanism, that may show no more in the end that human beings are so diverse by temperament and aptitude that they are better served by a choice of ethics or arts of life rather than by only one. The mutual exclusivity of the two philosophies is useful in making us consider that perhaps it is a mistake to look for a single ethical theory that is psychologically suitable for everyone. More important than that, perhaps, is the promise of competing theories to be personally and socially useful in largely compatible ways.

A comprehensive world-view. Modern scholars debate the question of whether Epicurean and Stoic ethics are primarily grounded in the antithetical physics and theologies of the two schools. However that may be, there is no question that their respective arts of life presuppose radically different outlooks on the physical world—mechanistic, evolutionary, and non-purposive in Epicureanism; anthropocentric, teleological, and theistic in Stoicism. That great difference of opinion is still with us, but we no longer deem it relevant to ethical theory. What does it tell us about the ancients?

First and foremost, it tells us that they think we cannot live well without having a comprehensive and *realistic* orientation to the world, an orientation that gives us a total sense of where we are. Secondarily, it tells us that, as individuals, we need to decide between competing cosmologies, theologies, ecologies, and political attitudes in order to feel at home in our environment. The assumption is not that such decisions will necessarily affect many of our day-to-day actions, but that they will have profound effect on how we view the meaning of our lives and on what responses to our situations it is rationally appropriate for us to give ourselves. An Epicurean will not say, as a Stoic will, that every situation he finds himself in is ultimately god-determined, and therefore to be accepted as fitting into a providential scheme. But no

less than the Stoic, albeit for different reasons, the Epicurean acknowledges the existence of natural laws which set constraints on what it is reasonable to expect from anything outside the powers of the self.

Hence in either system ethics takes on the status of a scientific skill, requiring both an understanding of the world at large and a technology for adapting one's own life to that understanding. We can now begin to see why these ancient philosophies place such huge emphasis on therapeutic strategies for dealing with personally debilitating and socially damaging passions. The point is not that such mental states are incompatible with happiness in some abstract sense or simply morally reprehensible; the point is rather that such emotions as fear of death, or desire for great material success, are incompatible with the kind of reason-based happiness it is appropriate to pursue in the Epicurean or Stoic understanding of what we are entitled to expect from the world.

We can now grasp the rationale underlying the fourth presupposition—*a system of values that makes minimal demands on the state of the world in which we happen to find ourselves*. Epictetus expresses the essence of this idea in his tart injunction, which he calls God's law: 'If you want some good, get it from yourself' (*Discourses* 1.29.4). The Stoic doctrine he presupposes here is that every situation in which we find ourselves offers material for good, that is to say, well-reasoned activity—even a situation such as Socrates having to drink the hemlock.[19] This is not to say that Stoics face the world without instinctual preferences for health, long life, material prosperity, the well-being of their loved ones, and so forth. Given the option, they do everything within reason to secure these things, but they do so 'with reservation, recognizing that these things do not present themselves with the label "yours" or "necessarily good"'.[20]

This minimalist expectation of the world, which has its Epicurean equivalent, is at the same time a maximalist recipe for happiness, but only if one endorses the fifth shared assumption—*human flourishing depends largely or entirely on one's mentality, character, and rational plan of life*. Here we come to the most counter-intuitive and questionable feature of Hellenistic ethics. Focusing simply on Stoicism, the more extreme theory, obvious objections seem to abound: first, the confinement of goodness to rational perfection as distinct from other items that human beings seem naturally to desire for themselves; secondly, and more worryingly, the theory seems to treat the

[19] See Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.5.19–21, which I discuss in Long 2002, 203.
[20] For the Stoic concept of 'reservation', see Inwood 1985, 119–26.

material well-being of other people as something that is not essential to *their* good, and therefore not something we should make it our business to promote for its own sake or be distressed about when it is absent. Thirdly, this strictly internalist conception of happiness seems to offer little incentive for risk-taking or for creative interventions in one's environment. Viewed from these perspectives, Stoicism looks more like a fortress mentality than a fully engaged or socially connected life, and therefore of little or no ethical interest to ourselves.

I shall respond to these objections shortly. But first, it is essential to recall one of my initial points concerning the gap between modern and ancient ethics in regard to social welfare and concern for another's good. Neither of the Hellenistic theories I have been discussing includes in its rationale the obligation to involve oneself in governmental policies or the promotion of socially progressive legislation. And one must doubt whether they could have achieved much along these lines under the conditions of ancient politics. However, as I have already emphasized, they present themselves as arts of life for anyone. And because anyone can join the club, the relevant question is what would human society be like if large numbers of people became Stoics or Epicureans? How would the collective good present itself under those conditions? Rather than first asking what Stoics or Epicureans as individuals are motivated to do about human welfare in general, we should ask how a society composed of such people would be disposed in relation to one another.

The answer to that question brings me to the sixth presupposition shared by Stoics and Epicureans—*the premising of happiness on only those feelings and motivations that are compatible with our natural and obtainable good*. There has been much interest lately in the importance Hellenistic ethics attaches to analysing and controlling emotions.[21] When the Epicurean recommends us not to fall in love, or when the Stoic advises us to rein in our affectionate impulses, our first reaction is probably one of repellence. Indeed, there are texts that make these arts of life appear not only disagreeably preoccupied with a chilling kind of equilibrium but also unworkable in terms of elementary psychology. However, I think it is a serious mistake, at least in the Stoics' case, to regard the maintenance of tranquillity as the operative factor, as if they started from some desire for that mind-set and designed their philosophy accordingly. My own view is, rather, that they were seeking what I have

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[21] See Nussbaum 1994, Sihvola and Engberg-Pedersen 1998, and Sorabji 2000.

already called a strategy for living well at all seasons, and that it was the design of that strategy that gave them reason to value the tranquillity that supposedly ensued.

In fact, I want to argue that in Stoicism emotional control or tranquillity is not only or even primarily desirable *per se*, but is also an essential condition for the proper performance of our social roles, and hence an instrument of morality in our own sense. I shall also argue that it was the craft model of trying to live with consummate skill rather than a fortress mentality as such that made them so wary of emotional risk-taking. My focus for the remainder of this chapter will be on Epictetus, whom I find the most intriguing exponent of the ancient art of living. I approach him with a brief preamble.

The toughest problem for any ethical theory is to come up with an account of the self that is persuasive to us, from our own internal perspectives as agents, showing why we have good reason to live ethically, as distinct from appeal to authority or mere prudence for motivating socially beneficial actions and refraining from their opposites. Immoralists need to be persuaded from their own perspective that they will not do well by pursuing their own interests at the expense of other people's. Greek philosophers, as we have seen, tried to solve this problem by making virtues of character indispensable to rational persons' pursuit of their own happiness. On this view, my adherence to moral norms is conducive to or constitutive of what I independently most want for myself.

Marriage between personal happiness or self-interest and morality is the most promising approach to the question of motivation. Why has it not become axiomatic in ethical theory? The short answer, I think, is that it seems far too optimistic and fragile to work in cases where inclination puts us in conflict with what we ought to do. Hence the modern concern with such concepts as categorical imperatives, the domain of what is right in principle, or actions rather than agents as the chief concern of the moral philosopher.

But the divorce of personal happiness from morality pays a very heavy price. Far from solving the problem of motivation, it leaves it psychologically up to the chancy contingencies of personal temperament. In addition—and this is the point I want to emphasize most strongly—it makes morality unappealing in terms of intellectual excitement and challenge: we should do our duty; we should obey moral rules; we should promote the happiness of the greatest number. If we find none of these imperatives personally appealing, our motivation to follow them is strongly at risk. Moreover, philosophical treatments of

such principles tend, for most people who are not professionally engaged in them, to be dull, unduly abstract, and completely humourless.

I now propose that Epictetus' model of the art of living deserves high marks both on the issue of motivation and relatedly on the issue of intellectual exhilaration. He presupposes the Stoic doctrines I have already discussed, but his special interest for us consists in what I shall call his performative challenge.

Consider this rousing passage from his discourses, where he is giving advice to his students about freeing oneself from powerful passions (2.18.15–19:[22]

Today when I saw a good-looking boy or woman I did not say to myself: 'If only I could have sex with her', and 'Her husband is a happy man'. For to call the husband happy is to say the same of the adulterer. And I don't draw a mental picture of what comes next—the woman with me, getting undressed, and lying down by my side. I pat myself on the head, and say: 'Well done, Epictetus, you have solved a clever problem in logic . . .'

But if the girl is willing, and nods to me and calls for me, and if besides she clutches me and presses me close and I hold back and win, I have solved a greater puzzle than the Liar argument.

How is this to happen?

You must want to be pleasing to yourself, you must want to appear beautiful to God. Make it your passion to become pure in the presence of your pure self and in the presence of God . . . Go back to Socrates and observe him as he lies down with Alcibiades and makes light of that man's beauty. Consider what a victory he knew himself to have won, a truly Olympic one.

Notice that Epictetus does not moralize about the intrinsic badness of adultery. His focus is not on that unethical act as being wrong in principle, but on psychological strategies for overcoming temptation. These include controlling one's imagination and being motivated to please, what he calls, one's self—wanting to appear beautiful to one's pure self and to God. This reflexive, inward turn invokes the Stoic doctrine that we all have a normative self, vested in our rational capacity, which is also the divinity as such. A good and happy life for Epictetus involves such cultivation or 'pleasing' of this normative self that it ideally becomes a beautiful artefact, liberated from all motivations that might result in unethical behaviour.

Notice too his analogy with solving a logical puzzle. He presents liberation from passion as being parallel to achieving success in a strictly technical

[22] I repeat the translation of this passage given in Long 2002, 215–16, where I include explanatory notes on the text.

pursuit. Emotional control and good motivation, according to this model, require expert action on oneself. Epictetus also brings Socrates, his favourite paradigm, into his advice; and he presents Socrates' famous resistance to Alcibiades' seduction as an Olympic victory. The idea is that by refraining from some superficially attractive but unethical action, *one actually achieves something positively better for oneself.* Epictetus' athletic image, which he uses all the time, represents his art of life as a project that is both supremely demanding and also personally appealing.

So far in this chapter I have used the familiar expression 'art' of life, but it would be better to say expertise or craft rather than art. Philosophy, says Epictetus, is just like any expertise or craft in having a specific subject-matter and rules for working upon that material. As are wood to the carpenter or bronze to the sculptor, so is each human being's life for the *technē tou biou*, but with this major difference. The other crafts work on externals, but the material for life's expertise is one's own life as such (*Discourses* 1.15.3). The ancient art of living, then, does not betoken manipulation of one's human environment but treats oneself as the only relevant artefact. More specifically, in Epictetus' formulations, it involves working on one's judgements and emotions; that is to say, fashioning oneself according to the principles of Stoicism. Strikingly, Epictetus even characterizes our human identity as a 'profession' (2.9.1). As the ordinary concept of a profession presupposes a practice calling for high skill, high standards of achievement, and a useful product, so he invites us to think of our lives and our relations to family and the performance of acquired social roles. His craft of life is aimed at turning his students into successful practitioners of all aspects of their human identity.

A further implication of his conception is that crafts are not only rule-governed and skilful dispositions for dealing with their material; they are also, he says, authoritative and generative of confidence (2.13.20). The craft of living, then, is much more than a technique or an instrument. It is also, and more importantly, the ruling principle of a life, endowed with the power and authority to enable its owner to function consistently well. Here, we begin to glimpse the conceptual connection between the basic idea of a well-crafted life and the focus on emotional control and tranquillity. You cannot be a good craftsman of your life if you are internally disturbed or liable to botch your material.

All of this, in Epictetus' discourses, is advanced as our proper ideal. His main focus is on what we might achieve by a committed attempt to internalize this craft, even though we are bound to make mistakes and keep having to

retrain for our ethical Olympics, as he calls it (3.25.1–5). This is not, then, a fortress mentality or an outlook immune from risk-taking. In Epictetus' treatment of the art of life, we are always at risk of jeopardizing our prospects of happiness; it is extremely difficult to take complete responsibility for our own lives, and to entrust ourselves with the capacity to treat others well when they do not reciprocate. Hence, under his conception of the good life, happiness becomes a challenging objective over which the self must compete with itself by setting itself the highest standards of excellence.

What he encourages his students to cultivate is moral skill or virtuosity, a way of living with moral flair, distinction, and resplendence. His proposals invite the rhetorical question: how could we do better for ourselves than setting our sights on the challenging goal of rational perfection and stellar performance of all our social roles?

I add a few further comments on Epictetus before drawing any general conclusions. He makes the first topic of his ethical instruction not actions or duties and interpersonal relationships but moral psychology—'desires and aversions' (3.2.1). We may call this topic training the will. He says of it that its objective is to ensure that a person not fail in his desires or have experiences he does not want. How could such an optimistic agenda be achieved? Only, according to Epictetus, if people are willing and able to internalize the basic Stoic system of values—namely, that what is strictly desirable for human beings is the one thing that only they as individuals can bestow on themselves, meaning a well-crafted mental disposition.[23]

If that sounds egoistic, why not? Charity, as we say, begins at home. Yet, as we read on in Epictetus, we soon discover that this well-crafted mind-set, promoting the individual's happiness, is also being advanced as the precondition for moral action. The mind that has its desires and aversions in good order is taken to be a mind that not only lacks any motivation for mistreating other persons; it also makes the good treatment of others actually constitutive of the good one should desire for oneself if one wants to get authentic happiness.

If we were to approach ethics today with the Hellenistic conception of an art of life, what might that involve, setting aside the unacceptable Stoic indifference to the goodness of material well-being, Epicurean austerity, and both schools' absence of any public policy for social welfare? The idea I have chiefly dwelt on in this study is the appeal to individual selfhood, treating the moral

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[23] See further, Chapter 18 of this volume, p. 388.

domain as something we shall naturally internalize if we make happiness a project that depends on our making the best, that is, most skilful, use of everything at our disposal in every circumstance, including our social environment. The art of life incorporates the moral domain within its broader interest in a life guided by reflection on how best to shape our natural motivations and potentialities. It asks us to premise happiness on what we can get from our mental resources, when these are deployed in non-exploitative ways that make ourselves, and not the state of the world, the controlling element of our own flourishing. Our motivations, accordingly, are presumed to be modifiable in self-benefiting and other-benefiting ways, by rethinking conventional values and by learning to cultivate a mind-set that rids us of the passions that mar contentment and make us victims of unethical impulses.

I think we can learn from all this, even if we lack the ancient philosophers' confidence in reason's capacity to generate happiness and moral goodness, and have doubts about their efforts to establish a natural good that is valid for all persons. In its Epicurean version, the art of life probably strikes us as being unduly quietist and unadventurous; for most of us want more than tranquillity in our specification of happiness. Stoicism, however, as treated by Epictetus, offers a remarkable combination of challenge, moral integrity, and contentment. The most compelling idea, shared by Stoics and Epicureans, is that any satisfactory ethics must be psychologically attractive, self-fulfilling, and completely self-shaping, as distinct from being self-denying, externally imposed, and only relevant to parts of one's life.

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PART II

SCEPTICISM

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3

Aristotle and the history of Greek scepticism

INTRODUCTION

No one has ever regarded the 'master of them that know' as a sceptic,[1] and the modern history of ancient scepticism has rarely found it necessary to mention his name. He has the honour of being the first philosopher Sextus Empiricus, in the introduction to his *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, names as a *dogmatikos*: 'one who in philosophical investigations believes that he has discovered the truth' (1.3). My purpose in this chapter is not to cast doubt on Aristotle's dogmatic credentials, and I will touch only incidentally on technical details of his theory of knowledge. What interests me is a series of questions that seem to have gone largely unasked. How far is Aristotle aware of the sceptical challenge to knowledge, and how far does he attempt to answer it? How does he assess earlier Greek thinkers who have been regarded as forerunners of the official sceptics? How much, if at all, did his own work influence and anticipate the debates between sceptics and dogmatists that are charted in Cicero's *Academica* and the writings of Sextus? These questions cannot be fully answered in a single chapter, but I shall argue that they are profitable lines of enquiry, and also that Aristotle deserves more than the occasional footnote in histories of ancient scepticism.

[1] 'Il maestro di color che sanno', Dante, *Inferno* IV.131.

There is of course an apparently excellent reason for his omission from such books. Greek Scepticism (capitalized as a self-conscious philosophical movement) was a post-Aristotelian development. Like most generalizations that familiar assertion begs several questions. The eponymous founders of what we call the two sceptical schools, Pyrrhonism and the New Academy, were active after Aristotle's time. But the genus of ancient scepticism which has Pyrrhonism and the New Academy as its two species is a piece of encyclopaedic tidy-mindedness with no historical authority. Arcesilaus and Carneades did not call themselves sceptics, nor neo-Academics, but Academics, members of the Platonic tradition. The Pyrrhonists distinguished them, as Academics, both from dogmatists and from the sceptics proper, who were themselves the self-styled followers of Pyrrho. The Academics, according to the Pyrrhonists, denied the possibility of discovering the truth, whereas they themselves continued to search for it.[2]

The Academy seems to have largely, if not completely, ignored Pyrrho. The later Pyrrhonists regarded what we call the sceptical Academics as one among many possible contenders for the description 'sceptic' in the Pyrrhonian sense, none of whom, on examination by Pyrrhonian criteria, is found to justify that title.[3] The others who are considered and rejected include Heraclitus, Protagoras, and Democritus. Yet all three of these were regarded by Aristotle, as the first two at least had already been regarded by Plato, as constituting a challenge to knowledge (see below, p. 52). It is quite probable that Pyrrho himself was influenced by Xenophanes and Democritus, and it is certain that the Academic Arcesilaus invited support for his ignorance from Socrates and many pre-Socratic philosophers.[4] Modern historians of ancient scepticism have to look back to the pre-Aristotelian period, but they should also linger over Aristotle himself before passing on to Pyrrho and the New Academy.[5]

Before turning to details, some comments about my methodology, and on what I hope to establish, are in order. To elucidate the questions of my opening paragraph, I propose to look at Aristotle from two points of view. First, I want to ask how far he and the official sceptics (by whom I shall

[2] Sextus, *PH* 1.2–4.
[3] Sextus, *PH* 1.210–41, with 220–35 for the Academy.
[4] For Pyrrho and Xenophanes, see Chapter 4 of this volume, pp. 86–8; for Democritus, Dal Pra 1975, vol. 1, pp. 47 ff.; for Arcesilaus, Long 1996/2001, 11–16.
[5] The celebrated scholar of ancient scepticism, Victor Brochard, mentions Aristotle only to dismiss his relevance, see Brochard 1923, 29, together with the useful corrective already offered by De Lacy 1958, esp. 61–4, and 70 f.

chiefly mean Sextus Empiricus) share sufficient common ground to suggest that they could have had a useful argument about the aims and methods of philosophy. Second, I am interested in Aristotle's apparent concern with particular arguments or strategies which became the stock-in-trade of sceptical controversies with dogmatists. There is some overlap between these two points of view, and I have not attempted to keep them quite separate from one another. The Aristotelian texts for the second topic are more restricted than those which can be invoked to discuss the first, and the philosophical and historical inferences which can be drawn from the material do not fully correspond in the two cases. There are a number of striking parallels between Aristotle's concerns, especially in *Metaphysics* Gamma, and issues debated by Stoics and their sceptical opponents. For the sake of clarity I have taken up a definite position on interpreting the significance of these matters. I acknowledge, though, that some people will probably think that Aristotle prefigures later issues less than I do.

The most important point to recognize at this stage of research is the common ground, whatever one makes of it. I do not assume that the Stoics and the sceptics had read all or most of the texts of Aristotle I will mention, probable though I think that this is. Nor should one forget that the development of Greek dialectic brought to light issues concerning proof and truth, autonomously as it were, which may cast doubt on Aristotle's anticipation of scepticism, or on later dogmatists and sceptics learning from him. There was nothing closely like Pyrrhonism or Academic scepticism in Greek philosophy up to the time of Aristotle. Having issued all these caveats, I leave it to my readers to decide what to make of the material.

ARISTOTLE AND SEXTUS EMPIRICUS: COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

It will be helpful if I point the way by comparing and contrasting some of the dialectical aims and methods of Aristotle with those professed by Sextus Empiricus. In the process we should remember that, though Sextus probably wrote in about AD 200, he was using the methodology and material of earlier Pyrrhonists, especially Aenesidemus, who left the Academy and declared allegiance to Pyrrho, probably during the middle years of the first century BC.[6]

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[6] The biography of Aenesidemus is problematical, but what I have stated has the authority of Photius, *Biblioteca* cod 212 (pp. 169b–171a Bekker); cf. Brochard 1923, 244 with n. 3, and Glucker 1978, 116–18.

   This is what Sextus (*PH* 1.12) tells us concerning the origin of scepticism: 'Strong-minded people, who were troubled on account of the discrepancy (*anōmalia*) in things, and in doubt (*aporountes*) as to which of them they ought rather to give their approval, proceeded to investigate (*zētein*) what is true in things and what is false, with the aim of ceasing to be troubled as a result of deciding (*epikrisis*) these questions.' A little later Sextus repeats this account of the sceptic's philosophical starting point, noting his wish to decide about (*epikrinai*) the truth of mental states (or appearances, *phantasiai*); and then he says (*PH* 1.26): 'He [i.e. the proto-sceptic] fell into disagreement of equal weight (*isosthenē diaphonian*), and being unable to make a decision he suspended judgement: while he was in this state, there followed, as it turned out, absence of trouble (*ataraxia*) in regard to the content of beliefs.'

   According to this story the original sceptic was a strong-minded philosopher who wanted to get at the truth, as a way of settling the discrepancies or disagreements which troubled him in his experience of the world. As a result of his investigations he found that he was faced not only with conflicting appearances but also with conflicting appearances of equal weight; his inability to adjudicate between them resulted in his suspending judgement, and this turned out to give him what he had been looking for all along—freedom from disturbance. The crucial notions in this account are: first, disturbance or *aporia* in the face of conflicting appearances; second, philosophical investigation of them; third, attempts to settle the discrepancies by adjudicating between them; fourth, discovering the reason why they cannot be settled, that is, the equal weight of the conflicting appearances; and fifth, suspension of judgement as the cure for the initial disturbance or *aporia*.

   How might Aristotle react to this philosophical biography? He could say that Sextus has borrowed his first three stages from his own *Metaphysics*. For Aristotle it is wonder and *aporia* which prompted the first philosophers to raise questions about 'immediate perplexities' and then 'greater ones', as for instance the changes of the moon and the sun (*Metaph*. 1.2, 982b11–17). What Sextus calls a desire to escape from disturbance (*tarassomenoi*) is regarded by Aristotle as a desire to escape from 'ignorance', *agnoia* (928b20). The problem of discrepancy in things, or discrepant appearances, which leads on to Sextus' third stage, is also one that arises early in the *Metaphysics*. In the opening chapter of book 2 (Little Alpha), Aristotle seeks to show why the difficulties that anyone encounters in contributing to the grasp of truth do not exclude the totality of their contributions from achieving

something considerable.⁷ He advances a theory of progressive and cumulative knowledge, based on the premiss that no individual can contribute more than a little, but 'we cannot all fail'. Moreover, the difficulties we experience may be due to ourselves and not be 'in the things'.

Then, at the opening of book 3, Aristotle sets out the problems of metaphysics as a series of *aporiai*, 'conflicting views'. Much like Sextus, he asserts that people who desire to be rid of difficulties should study them well: 'for the later provision of resources (*euporia*, the contrary of *aporia*) is a release from the earlier difficulties, and release is impossible when we do not know the knot . . . . It is impossible to advance.'⁸ He argues that an attempt to study the *aporiai*, to clear the ground, is a necessary preliminary to any philosophical investigation; and he concludes this introduction by saying that one who has heard both sides is necessarily in a better position to decide or judge (*krinai*, 995b2–4).⁹

Note the significance of Aristotle's claim for our comparison and contrast with the sceptic. A Pyrrhonist says that what results from considering and weighing divergent appearances or opinions is the lack of any means of deciding between them; they are found to be of equal weight, and so his philosophical quest stops dead in its tracks. Aristotle, on the other hand, thinks that the survey of discrepant views yields positive results, in that it exposes the problems to be considered and provides possible material for the solution. The Pyrrhonist finds in discrepant views and the absence of a criterion for deciding between them the principal reason for suspending judgement about how things are in reality (externally to us, objectively, and so forth). Aristotle sees discrepant views as a natural consequence of human enquiry: they constitute the *endoxa*, the commonly held opinions on a subject, and their discrepancy is not a reason for despairing of a solution but something which clarifies the philosopher's task and puts him in a better position to decide.

The assumptions which lie behind the opposite outcomes of reviewing *aporiai*—equal strength of the conflicting alternatives for the Pyrrhonist versus the Aristotelian philosopher's better position to decide between

⁷ Cf. *EE* 1.6, 1216b30–1 for 'each human being's affinity to the truth'.
⁸ 995a28–33. On Aristotle's aporetic method and its positive significance see Le Blond 1939 and Aubenque 1961, 3–19.
⁹ This comment recalls the epistemological utility of dialectic, as stated in *Top*. 1.2, 101a34–6, πρὸς δὲ τὰς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν ἐπιστήμας, ὅτι δυνάμενοι πρὸς ἀμφότερα διαπορῆσαι ῥᾷον ἐν ἑκάστοις κατοψόμεθα τἀληθές τε καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος. The notion of *aporia* as equality of opposing arguments was familiar enough to Aristotle for him to cite it as a *topos*, *Top*. 6.6, 145b1–2.

them—I do not wish to examine at this stage. What cannot be denied is that Aristotle presents conflicts of views here in a fashion very similar to that of Sextus: compare, for instance, Aristotle's review of the question whether being and unity are the substances of things or whether some other entity underlies being and unity. 'In either case there is a difficulty', says Aristotle, after detailing both alternatives (1001b1), but he does not conclude from this, as Sextus would do, that the alternative proposals are of equal weight, and therefore the problem of deciding betwen them cannot, just for that reason, be resolved. [10]

ARISTOTLE AND THE FIVE MODES OF AGRIPPA

Further encouragement to the comparison of both philosophers may be found in the fact that Aristotle is aware of most of the material which forms the basis of the Pyrrhonist's 'modes' (*tropoi*) for suspending judgement. Sextus' standard techniques of refutation, especially in the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, are the 'five modes' he attributes to 'the later Sceptics', elsewhere identified with Agrippa.[11] These are dialectical strategies which are supposed to enable their user to attain, or bring others to attain, suspension of judgement. I have already mentioned the first mode, 'disagreement (*diaphōnia*), which plays an enormous part in Sextus. He describes it as 'irresolvable conflict because of which we are unable to choose or reject something' (*PH* 1.165). It is in order to reveal its force and relevance that he reviews at such length the dogmatic positions on the main problems of philosophy.

The second mode of Agrippa, 'infinite regress' (*eis apeiron*), is used in arguing that what is advanced as a proof needs a further proof, and so *ad infinitum*. Aristotle's awareness of this apparent threat to knowledge needs no lengthy exposition. It forms the basis of his insistence (to which I will return shortly) that the primary premises of a demonstrative proof (*apodeixis*) cannot themselves be proved, and he frequently insists, too, that it is a symptom of inadequate education to demand proofs of everything.[12]

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[10] Aristotle does not always maintain that convincing solutions can be found; cf. *Metaph*. 13.9, 1085b36–1086a16, where he uses the Platonists' 'disagreement' (*diaphōnein*, Sextus Empiricus' favorite dialectical device) concerning Forms and numbers as evidence that 'these things, because they are not true, cause their disturbance' (*tarachē*, Sextus' source of the philosophical impulse).

[11] *PH* 1.164–9; see Long 1978*c*.

[12] Cf. *Metaph*. 2.2, 994b20; 2.3, 995a12; 4.3, 1005b3; 4.4, 1006a6; 4.6, 1011a8; 4.7, 1012a21; Theophrastus in Proclus, *in Tim*., vol. 2 p. 120, 9–22 Diehl and Theophrastus, *Metaph*. 9b21–24.

The third mode, 'relativity' (*pros ti*), alludes to the notion that the appearance of something to a percipient is no ground for assenting to that appearance as evidence of some actual state of affairs (*PH* 1.167). In *Metaphysics* Gamma Aristotle deals at length with the thesis that all appearances are true (Protagoras' doctrine), and one of its consequences, which he refutes, is that everything is relative (1011a17).

Sextus' name for the fifth mode of Agrippa is 'circular reasoning' (*diallēlos tropos*, *PH* 1.169), whereby what is needed in order to settle a problem is itself in need of proof from (the settlement of) the problem. Aristotle offers a positive account of 'circular or reciprocal demonstration' in the *Prior analytics* (2.5, 57b18; cf. 2.6, 59a32), but he establishes its inadequacies as a method of 'unconditional proof' in a well-known section of the *Posterior analytics* (see below). There he also seeks to disarm the fourth mode, 'from hypothesis' (*ex hypotheseōs*), described (*PH* 1.168) as 'the recourse of the dogmatists when, driven away to infinity (*eis apeiron*), they begin from something which they do not prove but claim to adopt without demonstration 'by way of concession' (*kata synchōrēsin*).[13] In fact, three of these five modes are formally handled by Aristotle in his introductory account of demonstrative knowledge in *Posterior analytics* book 1.

In that book's first two chapters Aristotle argues that demonstrative knowledge must be based on syllogisms whose premises are primary and undemonstrated and which are also prior to, causes of, and better known than the conclusion (71b20–33). Then, in chapter 3, he says: 'The necessity of knowing the primary things has made some people think that knowledge does not exist, and others, that it does exist but there are demonstrations of everything.'[14] The first claim, says Aristotle, rests upon an assumption he accepts: knowledge of the posterior must depend on what is prior where prior

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In the first Aristotelian passage, and in the second one of Theophrastus, demanding proof of everything is explicitly stated to undermine knowledge, as it is in *APo*. 1.3 (see main text below). If Aristotle has a specific philosopher in view, this is likely to have been Antisthenes (cf. n. 14 below).

[13] For *ex hypotheseōs* cf. also Aristot., *APr*. 1.23, 40b25; *APo*. 1.3, 72b15, 22, 83b39; 2.6, 92a7, 20.

[14] 72b5–7. On Aristotle's first opponents see Cherniss 1944, 65: 'There is no likelihood that such an attitude was restricted to a single group or school; anyone who was inclined to scepticism would be likely to maintain it as shown *by its reappearance in the work of Sextus* [my italics] . . . Nevertheless Aristotle frequently refers to it as the basis upon which a certain group refused to admit the law of contradiction (*Metaph*. 4, 1006a5–11, 1011a7–20, 1012a20–34; 11, 1063b7–14), and this refusal he attributes specifically to Antisthenes and his followers (*Metaph*. 5, 1024b3–34, *Top*. 1.11, 104b20–1).' On the second opponents, cf. his remarks *ad loc*. and also Barnes 1975, 106 and Barnes 1976.

means primary, and it also rests on a dilemma which he refutes. The dilemma is this. Either the move from the posterior to the primary is an infinite or a finite series; if it is infinite, the primary truths can never be reached; if it is finite, the primary truths cannot themselves be known because they cannot be demonstrated.

Aristotle's opponents here are characterized as making typically Pyrrhonian use of the two modes, 'infinite regress' and 'from hypothesis'.[15] I mean that they use these strategies in order to argue against a foundation for knowledge. Aristotle's second set of opponents agree with the first group in claiming that all knowledge must proceed 'through demonstration . . . but they say nothing prevents there being demonstration of everything; for the demonstration can be circular and reciprocal' (*ex allēlōn*).[16] We need not investigate how such circular proofs might work.[17] The interest of it to us here is that Aristotle plays Sextus' own game by arguing that circular proof is impossible for 'demonstrating unconditionally' (72b25).

As to the first set of opponents, he rejects the premise of their dilemma: 'We say that not all knowledge is demonstrative' (72b18). And so he accepts the second horn of the dilemma; that is, he states that the series from the posterior to the primary truths is finite, and, therefore, the primary truths are not capable of demonstration. But, for Aristotle, that is not a reason for regarding them as unknowable. They are of course, as he argues in the last chapter of *Posterior analytics* book 2, not objects of any proof but truths that we know through induction and *nous*. It is not difficult to pick holes in Aristotle's answer to his first-line opponents here: the epistemological work he assigns to *nous*, however we interpret this, is open to the sceptical rejoinder that *nous* needs a criterion to justify its knowing anything. I pass over that large problem now, but not without this observation.

Although Aristotle and Sextus must obviously disagree about the possibility of undemonstrated knowledge, the route which Aristotle traces from perception of particulars to apprehension of universals has, if only at second or third hand, a sceptical history. Sextus as a sceptic cannot allow that empiricism has any justification as a theory of knowledge, but he does, however non-committally, account for concepts as derivatives of perception.

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[15] See e.g. Sextus, *PH* 2.36, 88–90, *M* 8.347.

[16] 72b15–18; ἐξ ἀλλήλων is equivalent in sense to what Sextus calls the διάλληλος τρόπος, Agrippa's fifth mode. The Stoics used διάλληλος λόγος for a form of 'undemonstrated' argument where the conclusion is established 'reciprocally', *SVF* 2.273.

[17] The topic is well discussed by Barnes 1976.

He uses that account in order to refute Platonic and Democritean 'abolition of perceptions',[18] and it seems likely that he did think of the phenomena which form the objects of our consciousness as originating in an interaction between our sense organs and something unspecifiable in the external world.[19] The details of this account of concept formation can be traced back to the Epicureans and Stoics. To the extent that these agree with Aristotle in regarding perception as the starting point of all concepts, all three dogmatists are relevant to Pyrrhonism.

The point I want to insist on is Aristotle's quite explicit concern, with terms and procedures constantly invoked by Sextus, to avoid the charge that demonstrative knowledge involves an infinite regress or unproved assumptions or circular reasoning. It goes without saying that the opening of *Posterior analytics*, like *Metaphysics* Gamma (to which we will come shortly), is of the greatest methodological importance to Aristotle. If we find him there responding to three of the Pyrrhonist's favorite strategies, and familiar elsewhere with the polemical use to which the remaining two modes of Agrippa can be put, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he was aware of the main tendencies of the sceptical challenge in its later formal development. Aristocles, an Aristotelian of the second century AD, remarked that Aristotle argued against those who, like Pyrrho, maintained (allegedly) that 'we are naturally constituted so as to know nothing'.[20] This was not an anachronistic observation, as will become clearer still when we turn now to material used by the Pyrrhonists in their set of 'ten modes', first formalized by Aenesidemus, and Aristotle's apparent familiarity with this kind of material.[21]

ARISTOTLE AND THE TEN MODES OF AENESIDEMUS

The ten modes, like the five we have just considered, are dialectical procedures which the Pyrrhonist uses in order to cast doubt on any proposition as certainly true. However, the modes of Aenesidemus differ from those of Agrippa in consisting not of logical strategies but of a large body of evidence to show that, for instance, humans and animals differ in their sense impressions; humans differ among themselves; the senses differ between one another; people sense things differently according to whether they are awake or

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[18] *M* 8.56 ff.   [19] See Long 1978c, 36 with n. 18.
[20] Ap. Euseb., *PE* 14.18.2 (LS 1F). Aristocles' own refutation of Pyrrhonism makes use of Aristotelian arguments (which will be discussed below); see esp. Euseb., *PE* 14.18.8–9.
[21] On Aenesidemus and the ten modes see Annas and Barnes 1985.

asleep, healthy or ill, calm or emotional, and so on; sense perception depends on variable external conditions and is relative to those conditions.[22]

As far as one can tell, Aenesidemus, the founder (at least practically speaking) of later Pyrrhonism, was the first philosopher who formally classified this material into ten distinct modes of argument which were thereby systematized as such in the sceptic's arsenal. There is no reason to think that Aristotle knew of a similar classification. But it has long been recognized that the material itself, or much of it, is as old as Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Democritus. It was certainly familiar to Plato who, in preparing for his exposition and refutation of Protagoras (*Tht.* 154a2–8), has Socrates present conflicting appearances in three groups corresponding to the first, second, and fourth modes of Aenesidemus.[23] Aristotle, then, when he defends himself against sceptical usage of such material, is not combating Pyrrhonism as such. But it seems to me highly probable that he provided the dogmatic opponents of the later Academics and the Pyrrhonists with many of their favourite defences.

In *Metaphysics* Gamma 4 Aristotle undertakes to defend the principle of non-contradiction, which he has sought to establish as the 'firmest of all principles' (1005b17 ff.), against anyone who says, as Heraclitus did 'according to some people' (1005b23–5), that it is possible for the same thing to be and not to be, and to believe so (1005b35–1006a2). Aristotle interprets Protagoras' thesis—that whatever appears to each human being is so for each human being—as having the necessary consequence 'that everything is simultaneously true and false' (1007b18–25, cf. 1009a6–9), and he proceeds to say that anyone who denies the principle of non-contradiction, or what comes to the same, who upholds Protagoras' thesis, 'out of genuine puzzlement' (1009a18 ff.), has arrived at this position 'as a result of what they perceive' (1009a22–5). In order to refute the notion that everything that is perceived is true, Aristotle reviews the considerations which have led to this belief. I will concentrate here on those which are common to the ten 'modes' of Aenesidemus.

As we have just seen, the first two of these modes deal with the differences between human and animal perception and the differences between human

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[22] For the ancient evidence cf. Sextus *PH* 1.36 ff. and DL 9.79 ff.

[23] 'Would you be prepared to insist that every colour appears to a dog, or any living creature, just the way it appears to you? And what about another man? Is the way something appears to him like the way it appears to you? Or wouldn't you rather say that it doesn't appear the same even to yourself, because you're never in a similar condition to yourself?', trans. McDowell 1973.

beings in respect of perception. Aristotle recognized that these considerations could lead to either Protagorean subjectivism (whatever is perceived is true) or 'Democritean' scepticism (nothing is true or everything is obscure to us).[24] As grounds of subjectivism or scepticism he mentions the same thing tasting different to different people, the inappropriateness of judging truth by numerical criteria, the difference between the perceptions of the healthy and the sick, differences between humans and animals, and the same person not always perceiving the same thing to be the same (1009b2–9). The conclusion about obscurity (*adēlon*), which he attributes to Democritus, was the response of the Pyrrhonists to every claim about how things are in themselves.[25]

A little later (1010b4 ff.) Aristotle covers more material common to the Pyrrhonian modes when he mentions his opponents as puzzled about

whether magnitudes and colours are such as they appear to those at a distance or alternatively to those close by, or whether they are as they appear to the healthy or alternatively to the sick, or whether those things are heavier which appear to the weak or alternatively to the strong, or whether those things are true which appear to those asleep or alternatively to those awake.[26]

And he agrees with Aenesidemus' third mode that 'it is possible for the same thing to appear honey to the sight but not to the taste . . . for the same things do not always appear the same way to everyone, or always to the same person, but they often appear the opposite in respect of the same time' (1011a25–33). Aristotle, then, was fully aware of material that could be used in what has later been called the argument from illusion.[27] Characteristically, he gives his opponents a run for their money. Moreover, his awareness of scepticism is not merely seen in his familiarity with material that the later Pyrrhonists used for arriving at suspension of judgement. We can also find him, in *Metaphysics* Gamma, describing a position which is identical to that *formally* adopted by the early Pyrrhonists, and throwing down the gauntlet himself in a manner which hits the official sceptic at one of his most vulnerable points.

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[24] 1009b11–12, for Democritus. Whether in fact Democritus held such views is controversial, but that does not affect Aristotle's argument here. Arcesilaus (Cicero, *Acad.* 1.44) is said to have regarded Democritus as a predecessor on the strength of his claim (DL 9.72) that 'truth is in an abyss'.

[25] Cf. Sextus *PH* 1.13.138, etc. The Stoics (as presented by Antiochus of Ascalon) charged the Academics with making everything *adēla*, Cicero, *Acad.* 2.54, cf. 2.32.

[26] For Academic use of such considerations and Stoic answers to them cf. Cicero, *Acad.* 2.52–3, 88–90.

[27] See Kenny 1967. He compares its various forms in Plato *Tht.*, Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, Berkeley, and Ayer.

In the best evidence we have for the position of the historical Pyrrho, Timon of Phlius described it thus:[28]

Things are equally indistinguishable, unmeasurable, and indeterminable. For this reason neither our perceptions nor our opinions are true or false. Therefore for this reason we should not put our trust in them, but we should be without opinions (*adoxastoi*), inclining neither this way nor that, steadfast, saying concerning each thing that it no more is than is not, or that it both is and is not, or that it neither is nor is not. The result to those who actually adopt this attitude, says Timon, will be first non-assertion (*aphasia*) and then freedom from disturbance (*ataraxia*).

From the world's indiscernibility Pyrrho, according to Timon, inferred that neither perceptions nor opinions are true or false.[29] This seems to deny the principle of non-contradiction, since if the opinion *p* is neither true nor false, and the opinion not-*p* is neither true nor false, then *p* and not-*p* are indistinguishable in respect of truth and falsehood. The denial is confirmed in the next sentence: 'saying concerning each thing that it no more is than is not . . . '

Now consider Aristotle's characterization of anyone who denies the principle of non-contradiction (*Metaph.* 4.4, 1008a30–5): 'But at the same time it is plain that with such a man there can be no enquiry about anything; for he says nothing. For he says neither that it is thus nor not thus, but that it is both thus and not thus; and again he denies both of these, saying that it neither is thus nor not thus; for otherwise something would be already definite.' Here, in almost identical language, Aristotle assimilates his opponent to the official description of the early Pyrrhonists authorized by Timon.[30] The early Pyrrhonist does say nothing, in Aristotle's sense. He combines contradictories in anything he says about things because in this way he runs no risk of saying anything definite.[31] He rejoices in the fact that you cannot enquire

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[28] Aristocles ap. Euseb., *PE* 14.18.3–4, which is discussed in all the standard books on Greek scepticism. See also Chapter 4 of this volume, p. 71 n. 4, and LS 1F.

[29] The interpretation of the inference is difficult and highly controversial; see Postscript.

[30] I say 'early' Pyrrhonists because it is doubtful whether Sextus would accept the description or its grounds (perceptions neither true nor false, etc.). Of course he readily uses the 'no more' (*ou mãllon*) formula, though not dogmatically (*PH* 1.191), but his dialectic requires constant use of the principle of non-contradiction: the method of arriving at suspension of judgement by opposing arguments of equal strength only makes sense if one takes it, however informally, that contraries or contradictories cannot be coherently combined. For examples of Sextus' application of the principle, cf. *M* 1.11, and the excluded middle (Aristotle's further axiom in *Metaph.* 4.7, 1011b23 ff.), *M* 1.13.

[31] The parallelism between the two texts is so striking that one might suppose, as Gisela Striker suggested to me, that Timon and other Pyrrhonists picked up the description from Aristotle, paradoxically accepting it as adequate and irreproachable (cf. the reaction to the self-contradiction

with him about anything.[32] If Aristotle can present his opponents in the same way, that is further evidence for our attributing to him not merely an awareness of what scepticism involves, in one of its Pyrrhonian manifestations, but also a determination to remove himself from the threats to knowledge that it makes.

If we now return to the later Pyrrhonian modes, *Metaphysics* Gamma can also provide us with the means of seeing how Aristotle would respond to Sextus' efforts to discomfit the dogmatists over their opinions on the criterion of truth.

Sextus seeks to show, at great length, that the arguments against any criterion are equal to those which have been advanced in its favour.[33] One of his favourite techniques is to say that any claim that such and such is the criterion will itself need a further criterion: for instance: 'Who will be the judge that the criterion of the Agent is Man? For if they say that no man is to be the judge, that will be begging the question. But if they say that another animal is the judge, how is that animal adopted for the purpose of judging whether Man is the criterion?' (*PH* 2.35 f.).

At the beginning of *Metaphysics* Gamma, Aristotle represents his opponents, who have based their case on the perceptual puzzles, as 'seeking to know who will judge the healthy person, and in general, who is to judge rightly in each case' (1011a4–6). This is precisely Sextus' challenge. Aristotle tartly replies: 'Such questions are like puzzling over whether we are at this moment asleep or awake, and all such puzzles come to the same thing.[34] For these people demand a reason for everything; they seek a starting point, and seek to get it through demonstration' (1011a6–10). Aristotle uses here exactly the same rejoinder that he employed in *APo.* 1.3: you can't demand proof of everything, a justification for every belief. He appreciates that it is fatal to argue with the sceptic on the sceptic's own terms.

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argument at Sextus *PH* 1.14 and 206). But the two descriptions may well be independent of each other. In juxtaposing them I am not assuming that Aristotle had some proto-sceptical text in mind (though he already had a model in Plato, *Tht.* 183a, where Socrates' target is 'Heraclitean' flux (εἰ πάντα κινεῖται, πᾶσα ἀπόκρισις, περὶ ὅτου ἄν τις ἀποκρίνηται, ὁμοίως ὀρθὴ εἶναι. οὕτω τ᾿ ἔχειν φάναι καὶ μὴ οὕτω, εἰ δὲ βούλει, γίγνεσθαι) but, rather, that Aristotle was concerned to argue against a position which, with hindsight, we can usefully compare with early Pyrrhonian self-characterization.

[32] I have no opportunity here to explore Academic and Stoic arguments, but notice that, in Antiochus' defence of Stoic epistemology, philosophical enquiry is allegedly ruled out if true and false cannot be distinguished, Cicero, *Acad.* 2.22 and 27.

[33] *PH* 2.14–79, greatly expanded in *M* 7. 27–446; see Long 1978*c*.

[34] Once again there is a reminiscence of the *Theaetetus*, 158b 5 ff.

Nonetheless, as we shall now see, Aristotle is prepared to argue that it is impossible to live on the basis of denying the principle of non-contradiction; such a denial he regards as, practically speaking, equivalent to complete scepticism about knowledge and reasonable belief.

ARISTOTLE AND THE ARGUMENT 'SCEPTICISM MAKES LIFE IMPOSSIBLE'

The charge that total doubt or a disinclination to believe anything is incompatible with everyday life has frequently been levelled against scepticism. Its most famous exponent is David Hume, who said of the Pyrrhonist:

He must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge anything, that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. All discourse, all action would immediately cease . . . It is true so fatal an event is very little to be dreaded. Nature is always too strong for principle. And though a Pyrrhonian may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples, and leave him the same, in every point of action and speculation, with the philosophers of every other sect.[35]

Such an alleged discrepancy between sceptical theory and practice was developed by the Stoics as their strongest weapon against the sceptical Academy. Its fame became sufficient for it to be labelled, as an argument, by the single word *apraxia*, 'inactivity', and compared to a Gorgon, because it *petrified* its opponents.[36] It seems to have passed unnoticed that Aristotle, long before the Stoics, argues in *Metaphysics* Gamma in a manner very close to their charge of *apraxia*, a consequence of scepticism also adduced in antiquity against the Pyrrhonists. The significance of Aristotle's contribution here will become clearer in the light of the post-Aristotelian history of *apraxia*.

Very briefly, the Stoics maintained that no action is possible unless human beings give their assent to something. In order to act, we need to hold firm beliefs about ourselves and the way the world impinges on us, and we also need to hold firm beliefs about the value or desirability of whatever our actions are aimed at. The Academic sceptics and the Pyrrhonists replied that it was possible to act without holding any such beliefs.

[35] *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sect. XII, 128.
[36] Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 26, 1122A–F (LS 69A) and *St. rep.* 57, 1057A (LS 53S); Cicero, *Acad.* 2.24–5.

The Academics defended this position by recourse to the Stoic concepts, mental impression (*phantasia*) and impulse (*hormē*). An impression of the naturally suitable combined with the impulse to pursue the object of the impression was sufficient, they argued, to explain purposive action. There was no need to introduce 'assent' to the impression, as the Stoics supposed, and so beliefs need not enter into the psychology of action at all.[37] The Pyrrhonists answered the charge by reference to *phainomena*: in acting, one simply follows the appearances which arise naturally and involuntarily, we know not how, and the customs of society.[38]

So much for the post-Aristotelian history. What concerns us here is not the sceptics' rejoinders to the charge of *apraxia* but the nature of the charge and its Aristotelian antecedents. Just consider this description of Pyrrho in Diogenes Laertius (9.62): 'Pyrrho was consistent with this way of life [i.e. holding that nothing is more this than that], avoiding nothing and taking no precautions, but facing everything as it came, wagons, as it might be, precipices, dogs, and quite generally handing over nothing to the senses. But he was kept safe . . . by his disciples who accompanied him.' Diogenes then says that this story, though certified by Antigonus of Carystus, was denied by Aenesidemus, who said that while Pyrrho's philosophy was based upon suspension of judgement he did not lack foresight in his everyday life.[39] Here then we have, first, the popular account of Pyrrho: he was only saved from disaster by his friends, implying that his philosophy did make effective action impossible; and then we get the philosophical defence of Pyrrho by Aenesidemus, reconciling suspension of judgement with ordinary behaviour.

In the light of this background we may now return to *Metaphysics* Gamma. Aristotle's strategy in establishing the principle of non-contradiction involves a distinction between denying the principle in a statement and actually believing the denial.[40] He wishes to show not merely that it is impossible for *p* and not-*p* to be true simultaneously, but also that no one, whatever they may say, can actually as a matter of fact hold such a belief. At 1008b10 ff. he argues that

[37] References to the main sources are the passages from Plutarch and Cicero in the previous note. The Academic rejoinder, which probably goes back to Arcesilaus, does not advance a substantive position; it is a reply to an objection and characteristically seeks to put Stoic concepts to polemical use.
[38] Cf. Sextus, *PH* 1.21–4. How far the Pyrrhonist does admit to having beliefs of some kind is a controversial question; see *PH* 1.13, and the studies by Frede 1997 and Burnyeat 1997 which are available, along with their further contributions and with Barnes 1982*a*, in Burnyeat and Frede 1997.
[39] On Antigonus of Carystus, see Chapters 4 and 5 of this volume, pp. 71–2 and 98–101.
[40] Cf. 1005b35–1006a2; 1009a16–22.

anyone who should be in the state of 'believing nothing', 'but equally thinks and does not think [such and such], would not differ from a vegetable'. That Aristotle finds this a counterfactual state of affairs becomes plain in the sequel, which is extremely close in thought and language to the description of Pyrrho I have just quoted:[41]

So it is completely obvious that no one is like this, including those who state this thesis and anyone else. For why does he walk to Megara and not stay put when he thinks he should walk?[42] Why does he not first thing in the morning proceed into a well or a gorge [cf. Pyrrho], as it may be, but evidently takes care, as one who does not consider that falling in is something equally good and not good. It is plain then that he believes one thing to be better and the other not better; and if so, he must believe that one thing is a man and the other not a man, and one thing sweet and the other not sweet. For he does not seek after nor believe all things indifferently . . . so that, as it seems, all men believe some things hold unconditionally (1008b12–26).

Aristotle accordingly argues that, just as it is inevitable for one who denies the principle of non-contradiction to refute himself, 'if he says something' (1006a11 ff.), so such a person refutes himself whenever he does something. This is exactly the force of the *apraxia* argument: action without firm belief or assent is impossible, and therefore the sceptic refutes himself whenever he acts. Aristotle returns to the same point in a context I have already mentioned (1011a3 ff.), where he objects to people who demand a criterion for everything. Even those who are convinced by the arguments that it is impossible to distinguish true from false do not, he says, put such convictions to work in their behaviour (1010b10).

SCEPTICISM AND ARISTOTELIAN EPISTEMOLOGY

Aristotle, if I am right, anticipated and opposed many of the standard strategies which were later adopted by the Pyrrhonists. He has an important place in the history of Greek scepticism. But what this tells us about his own philosophy is as yet by no means clear. Even if Pyrrho himself merely repeated forms of scepticism which were already familiar to Aristotle, his historical

[41] It is also very close to the Epicurean Colotes' attack on the Academic sceptics for making life impossible (ap. Plut., *Adv. Col.* 27, 1122E ff.) which, as Plutarch presents it, draws upon the Stoic insistence on assent and firm belief.

[42] The mention of Megara may be a joke at the expense of the dialecticians of the so-called Megarian school whose 'founder' was the Socratic Eucleides. For the same general argument cf. *Metaph.* 11.6, 1063a28–35.

significance would still be considerable. Pyrrho was probably too young for Aristotle to know of him, but he must have been a renowned figure by the time that Epicurus and Zeno began to develop their philosophies. Epicurean and Stoic theories of knowledge seem to be quite explicit attempts to rebut scepticism in its early Pyrrhonian form. By denying that things are accessible to any discrimination (*anepikrita*), Pyrrho issued a challenge which made perceptual certainty and criteria of truth the primary problems of philosophy. Epicurus' problematic claim that 'all perceptions (*aisthēseis*) are true' should be interpreted as an uncompromising negation of Pyrrho's paralysing thesis that no perceptions or opinions are true or false (p. 54 above). The primacy of epistemology in Epicureanism and Stoicism acknowledges scepticism to be a very powerful philosophical presence.

Aristotle was not faced with scepticism as a strongly held position of his own day. Scepticism, in his understanding of it, is largely a consequence of conceptual problems going back to the fifth century. If, in the words of Burnyeat, Aristotle does not take his starting point to be the problem of perceptual certainty, one explanation may be the absence of a Pyrrho to issue the challenge.[43] But no account of the differences in epistemology between Aristotle and the Hellenistic schools can neglect the fact that Aristotle properly grasped the main issues which promoted Greek scepticism. The difference between him and his dogmatic successors does not consist in their seeing a problem which he has missed, but rather, they differ, to Aristotle's advantage on the whole, in their methodology and philosophical insight.[44] Burnyeat rightly calls attention to Aristotle's familiarity with sceptical arguments for 'conclusions which would undermine his enterprise', and his thinking some of them 'worth extended discussion'. But it is potentially misleading to continue: 'He is simply very firm that he is not going to let them structure his inquiries or dictate his choice of starting-points.' I would delete 'simply' and suggest that Aristotle was less detached and magisterial in handling sceptical arguments.

He is, after all, dealing with a large number of named predecessors in *Metaphysics* Gamma. The problem about truth and falsehood, which he thinks that they have, is traced by him to sense perception and conflicting appearances (1009a22 ff.). Admittedly, he is not concerned to distinguish

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[43] Burnyeat 1981, 136–8.
[44] Burnyeat 1981 lays stress on a shift from Aristotelian interest in science and explanation to strictly epistemological issues which, he thinks, came to the fore with the Stoics and Hellenistic Sceptics.

sceptical doubt from complete subjectivism or negative dogmatism. He assimilates the denial of the principle of non-contradiction to three equivalent theses: 'the same thing is true and false', 'everything is true', and 'everything is false' (1012a29 ff.). If this confuses 'Protagoras' (the subjectivist) with 'Democritus' (the negative dogmatist), no matter. What interests Aristotle and us is the reasoning and, in his view, the confusions, which have led philosophers to advance positions that assist the sceptic.

The basic reason Aristotle gives for Protagoras' thesis is 'the belief that intelligence is sense perception, and the latter is alteration, whence they say that what appears in sense perception is of necessity true' (1009b12–15). Aristotle attributes this belief to most of the pre-Socratics (including Homer! 'as some say').[45] Even apart from such attributions, the sheer length and concentration of his attack in *Metaphysics* Gamma is evidence of his concern to establish the objective credentials of 'first philosophy'. Much of his work recalls the *Theaetetus*, and, like Plato, Aristotle denies that sense perception is always free from error (1010b1 ff.). This is far from being his only reason for avoiding the Protagorean thesis and its unpalatable consequences, but it does imply, as the Stoics later maintained, that veridical and non-veridical perceptions can be distinguished.

The reason, I take it, why Aristotle has often been thought to be relatively unconcerned with the problem of perceptual certainty is the little that he says about it in contexts where he discusses *aisthēsis* and induction.[46] He does not appear to offer a criterion for the truth of perceptual judgements such as the Stoics advanced with their 'cognitive impressions', and he sometimes dodges the issue by the 'Platonic' strategy that there are changeless things which are not objects of perception and, therefore, not liable to Heraclitean or Protagorean difficulties.[47] But I do not think Aristotle simply takes it for granted, unproblematically, that the senses provide some material for knowledge. When we consider the difficulties of the Stoic criterion in its claim that perception of particulars by means of the cognitive impression is not only true

[45] 1009b28, preceded by reference to Protagoras, Anaxagoras, Democritus (cf. *An*. 1.2, 404a27–9), Empedocles, Parmenides, and followed by mentions of Heraclitus and Cratylus.
[46] Cf. Hartman 1978, 199: 'Epistemology, especially epistemological skepticism does not rank among Aristotle's greater concerns; and when he does verge on it, as in *Met*. Γ 5 and *An*. III 3, he does not well clarify his position on what seem to many philosophers to be the essential issues.' Contrast Ross 1923, 163, commenting on *Metaph*. 4.3–8: 'The argument here summarised contains in principle almost all that can or need be said in refutation either of complete scepticism or of sensationalism.'
[47] Cf. *Metaph*. 4.3, 1009a36–8, 1010a32 ff; 11.5, 1062a31 ff.

but incapable of being false, we should not conclude that the absence of such a notion from Aristotle indicates a gap in his methodology which he should have filled. If I have been right to find Aristotle anticipating and seeking to disarm sceptical challenges, it may be that there are other devices, not yet considered, which have a bearing on later debates between sceptics and dogmatists. The points most worth discussing here are perhaps his teleology, his treatment of the *endoxa*, and his conception that the conditions of knowledge vary with its subject-matter.

By way of preface to these one should remember that Aristotle nowhere entertains the possibility of solipsism. But this was never an important issue in ancient philosophy. Neither the Academics nor the Pyrrhonists attacked their opponents for assuming that something existed outside their own consciousness. Both sides took it for granted that the activation of our senses is generally caused by something which exists 'outside'. The debate about appearances was a controversy over the validity of sense perception as evidence for external states of affairs.

Epistemology and sense perception come together in the opening of the *Metaphysics*: 'All human beings have a natural desire for knowledge' (1, 980a1). Aristotle argues for this assertion by a series of steps. It is grounded initially in the appeal to evidence (*sēmeion*) of the delight human beings take in their senses. This in turn is justified by the statement that the senses are loved, especially sight, not just for their utility but for their own sake. The proof of this, Aristotle argues, is that we choose to see, above everything else, even when we are not exercising vision in order to act. This, he says, is because sight is the sense which above all others makes us capable of understanding (*gnōrizein*) and reveals many differences (*diaphoras*).[48] Notice that Aristotle does not formally argue for the dubious conclusion, knowledge must be possible because everyone desires it. His inference to the universal desire for knowledge from the pleasure we take in sense perception rests on the assumption that *aisthēsis* is a source of knowledge. Since the conclusion about the universal desire for knowledge, as a generalization, is difficult to deny, a sceptic will have to say that the cognitive value Aristotle attributes to the sense here is misplaced. But he must then explain why human beings do have a desire for knowledge, if he is going to argue with Aristotle.

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[48] Cf. *Top*. 2.7, 113a32 and *De sensu* 1.437a3, which shows that the 'differences' revealed by sight include figure, size, movement, and number. See also Theophr., *Metaph*. 8b10 ff.

The suggestion that there is a natural relationship between the senses' discriminating powers and the desire for knowledge was repeated by the Stoics (or by Antiochus of Ascalon's appropriation of Stoicism) when they argued that human beings use their senses in order to actualize their aptitude for knowledge: 'Since the human mind is supremely adapted to knowledge of things and consistency of life, it embraces in particular understanding and perception (*cognitionem et istam katalēpsin*) . . . which it loves both for its own sake and also for its utility. Therefore it uses the senses . . . '[49] This is in a context where the Academic sceptic is being answered at length. I do not say that this indicates Aristotle's motivation in *Metaph*. 1.1. But the parallels between the two texts are close enough to suggest one of his reasons, right at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, for linking the cognitive value of *aisthēsis* with the natural human desire for knowledge.[50]

As the Stoics were later to reply to the Academics (Cicero, *Acad*. 2.19 ff. and 51 f.), so Aristotle's defence of the general accuracy of sense perception rests upon teleological premises about an animal's fundamental needs and by appeal to standard conditions.[51] He says in the *De sensu* (436b18–437a3) that the three distance senses exist 'for the sake of safety', that is, for detecting food and avoiding harm. 'The many differences they announce are the foundations of theoretical and practical knowledge', an amplification of the claim made in *Metaph*. 1, 980a27. Animal life in general and human life in particular presuppose capacities to discriminate between items in the external environment. Aristotle is not impressed by the fact that people make perceptual mistakes. He, or the Peripatetic author of *Metaphysics* Book 11, insists that 'the same thing never seems sweet to one set of tasters and the opposite to another set, unless the sense organ and *kriterion* of such tastes belongs, in one of the two cases, to people who are damaged and injured' (1062b36 ff.). Error typically is due to 'opinions' (*doxai*) or 'imaginings' (*phantasiai*) and not to the data given in perception.[52] Further, it is not when 'we attend closely to the object of perception that we say "this appears to us to be a human being",

[49] Cicero, *Acad*. 2.31; other passages in this context can be usefully compared with Aristotle, especially 21–3. Following the Stoic Panaetius, Cicero stresses human beings' desire to discover the truth, *Off*. 1.13.

[50] The opening of the *Metaphysics* would be particularly well known if Jaeger 1955, 68 ff., is right in tracing its origin to a fuller treatment in the *Protrepticus*.

[51] For a good discussion of this point cf. Block 1961.

[52] Cf. *An*. 3.3, esp. 428a5–428b9.

but rather when we do not perceive it clearly' (*enargōs*).[53] Perceptual mistakes are prone to arise if someone is seriously ill or in a highly emotional state (*De insomniis* 460b3 ff.).

Here, then, we find Aristotle answering or giving material to answer sceptical objections to the cognitive value of sense perception, and similar responses have been frequently used since his time. Perhaps of greater signi-ficance to the history of later debates in antiquity between dogmatists and sceptics is his treatment of the *endoxa* (common conceptions) or *phainom-ena*. Every student of Aristotle is greatly indebted to G. E. L. Owen's study, '*Tithenai ta phainomena*'.[54] There Owen proved that *phainomena* in Aristotle cover the views that have been adopted on a subject as well as empirical obser-vations and that the same ambiguity attends his usage of *epagōgē* (induction) and *aporiai* (problems). Thus Aristotle invokes the views of 'the many or the wise' both as means of establishing the subject-matter of his enquiries and their problems and also as evidence he may himself use in advancing solu-tions. Quoting Owen (p. 88): '"For if the difficulties are resolved and the *endoxa* are left standing", as Aristotle says in both the *Physics* and the *Ethics*, "this in itself is a sufficient proof".'[55] And again (p. 90): '*Endoxa* also rest on experience, even if they misrepresent it (e.g. *Div.* 1, 462b14–18). If they did not Aristotle could find no place for them in his epistemology; as it is, an *endoxon* that is shared by all men is *ipso facto* beyond challenge.'[56]

Aristotle's patient accumulation of the views of his predecessors, so dif-ferent from Plato's published practice, was not motivated by an interest in intellectual history *per se*. It derives rather from considerations, mentioned earlier in this study, concerning the general human desire for knowledge, the difficulty of individual apprehension of the truth, the value of progressive and corporate collection of material, and, I may add here, the trained scientific dis-position.[57] 'We cannot all fail', he says, and it is this general faith in human rationality which justifies many of his aporetic surveys. Thus, in the first book of *Physics* he seeks to establish that the rest of his predecessors have all assumed in some way that the primary principles are opposites; he then adds, 'and with

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[53] *An.* 428a12–15. With this cf. the Stoic appeal to the efforts people make to get a clear and striking impression of the perceptible object, Cicero, *Acad.* 2.19; Sextus, *M* 7.258.

[54] Owen 1961.

[55] Citing *EN* 7.1, 1145b6–7 and *Phys.* 4.2, 211a7–11.

[56] Citing *EN* 10.2, 1172b36–1173a1; cf. 7.13, 1153b27–8, *EE* 1.6, 1216b26–35.

[57] Cf. *Metaph.* 2.1, 993b14; *APo.* 2.19, 99b18; *EN* 6.2, 1139b31.

good reason' (188a27), which he justifies by giving his own logical considerations for the claim that opposites do fulfil the role of irreducible principles. It would be over-simple to say that Aristotle is primarily interested in looking for the common denominator in opposing views, as if that were sufficient, by itself, to serve as the basis for positive argument. But he certainly regards it as essential to uncover, where he thinks he can, a common logical structure in discrepant views.[58]

Both the Stoics and the Epicureans used *consensus omnium* as a support for some of their positions. The Stoics especially appealed to 'common concepts' (*koinai ennoiai*), the general views of people, as support for a wide variety of theses. In doing so, they were hardening into a dogmatic procedure a flexible device of great importance to Aristotle's dialectic and methodology. He himself calls the 'demonstrative principles from which everyone demonstrates' (i.e. the principles of non-contradiction and excluded middle) *koinai doxai* (*Metaph.* 3.2, 996b26 ff.). Conversely, Sextus Empiricus found it necessary to advance arguments against 'the consensus of the many' as a criterion of truth.[59]

The final point I want to mention, in relation to later Greek scepticism, is one which distances Aristotle importantly from the new dogmatists of the Hellenistic era. Neither in Stoicism nor in Epicureanism do we find the range of distinctions and qualifications Aristotle makes in regard to the objects of knowledge and epistemological procedures themselves. By distinguishing, as he does, between experience (*empeiria*) and expertise (*technē*), understanding of the particular and understanding of the universal, what is nearer to knowledge of the fact and knowledge of the explanation[60]—by these and other distinctions, Aristotle has made the sceptic's task more difficult, or at least more complex, than it was to become in Hellenistic philosophy. The same result follows from his repeated insistence on not asking inappropriate questions, on not seeking justification for everything, and on using the methodology appropriate to the subject-matter. It is sufficient to recall his well-known remarks on the considerable disagreement and uncertainty surrounding ethical concepts and his deducing from these that 'we must be content to give an outline

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[58] For other examples see Le Blond 1939, 260 ff.

[59] Cf. *PH* 2.43–5, *M* 7.327–34.

[60] All of these are found in the first chapter of *Metaphysics* Alpha, and the last three, in various forms, in many other parts of his work. On the distinction between 'for the most part' and 'necessarily' cf. Barnes 1969, 134–6, who explores its logical and epistemological aspects in a manner which seems to me to complement some of the suggestions given above.

of the truth', and not a mathematical demonstration (*EN* 1.1, 1094b19 ff.). No doubt for this reason he is particularly anxious in the ethical treatises to proceed in conformity to 'common opinions' and to try to establish them on a well-reasoned critical basis.[61]

Aristotle does not try to settle every *aporia*. He recognizes that on some subjects 'contradictory views' can with good reason be held.[62] For considerations I can barely hint at here, the new dogmatists of the Hellenistic period were not content with exploring the pro and contra arguments in areas of the greatest controversy. It was not enough to understand the nature of the problem and advance a likely solution. The Stoics in particular were convinced that demonstrably certain answers could be given to all the main problems of philosophy. Their ideal wise man is infallible in all his theoretical and practical judgements, and the Stoics thought that such knowledge, if impossible to attain in fact, could and should be justifiable and sought after. It is no accident, then, that the Academic sceptics were continuously battling with the Stoics, nor again that the Stoics stand as the principal targets of Pyrrhonian dialectic.

Aristotle, though he would later be regarded as the model of systematic philosophy, was a more difficult opponent. He could even be characterized by Cicero as having the 'practice of arguing on both sides of every subject' (*Tusc.* 2.9).[63] No less distorted is Sextus' attempt to indicate the criterion of truth for Aristotle: perception (*aisthēsis*) for perceptibles, intellect (*nous*) for intelligibles, with *aisthēsis* standing to *nous* as a balance to our weighing things or a ruler to our assessments of straight and crooked (*M.* 7.217–26). This is an attempt, based upon the last chapter of *Posterior analytics* book 2, to fit Aristotle into Sextus' dialectical scheme for considering all the dogmatists' views on the criterion of truth. But it fails to give any indication of what it is like to read Aristotle, either in the treatises where he is seeking to resolve difficulties and establish his own principles or in the Organon itself. Above all it fails to show the impossibility of giving any simple description to Aristotle's philosophy.[64] He does share with the Stoics a deep-rooted belief in the

[61] Theophrastus faces the plural kinds of knowledge similarly: 'The starting-point and most important thing is the proper method' (*tropos*) *Metaph.* 9a11 f. Like Aristotle he maintains that people who seek a reason (*logos*) for everything destroy reason and, along with it, knowledge: '. . . they seek it in cases where there is and can be none', ibid. 9b21–4.

[62] Cf. *EE* 7.2, 1235b13–18 on friendship and other passages cited by Aubenque 1961, 15.

[63] See Chapter 14 of this volume, p. 299.

[64] Note Ross's admirable comment on the *Metaphysics*: 'It remains for Aristotle throughout a matter of "problems" or "difficulties" . . . on the whole no dogmatic system but a series of essays at the discovery of truth in a region which he feels to be full of obscurity' (Ross 1923, 155).

rationality of the universe and human capacity to understand it; but he also shares with Sextus a determination to survey, and, if need be, to find wanting the views that have been expressed on a subject and to leave some problems unresolved.

In conclusion, I have tried to show in what sense Aristotle does belong to the history of Greek scepticism. He was aware of the need to protect his own enquiries and methodology against a series of threats to knowledge. Some of these are dialectical devices, a remarkable number of which recur in the formalized 'modes' of later Pyrrhonism. Others look back more specifically to fifth-century debates, already thoroughly treated by Plato—especially Heraclitean flux and Protagoras' thesis about the relativity of all appearances. Aristotle, however, did not take the characteristic route of his predecessors in looking for a two-world metaphysics which put phenomena outside the realm of the truly knowable. Like the Stoics and Epicureans he has no reservations, at least in his practice, about the possibility of knowing perceptible objects,[65] and he is vulnerable to the modern sceptical criticism that we can never prove beyond all doubt that anything exists outside our consciousness.[66] But I question whether he would have revised his procedures in any substantial respects if he had read the books of Sextus Empiricus. Many of the dialectical strategies contained there were familiar to Aristotle, who dealt with them in a thoroughly robust style. Thus he left to later philosophers a series of defences against scepticism, some of which they adopted, and a methodology which turns the sceptic's grounds for giving up the quest for knowledge into reasons for maintaining the search and hoping for a solution.

APPENDIX

There is an alternative interpretation of the 'sceptical' material in Aristotle if one supposes, with Grayeff (1974, 82), that the corpus, as edited by Andronicus, reflects 'the teaching, not only of Aristotle, but of two or three generations of Peripatetic philosophers'. Grayeff, whose chief interest lies in the central books of the *Metaphysics*, finds many contexts (e.g. Zeta 10

[65] Which is not to deny passages in his work that indicate 'a confrontation between the necessity of things knowable and the contingency of nature', so Barnes 1969, 134, whose persuasive account of the educational purpose of the demonstrative syllogism helps to resolve the dilemma.

[66] 'Modern sceptical criticism', i.e. Descartes onwards, for reasons interestingly argued by Burnyeat 1982*a*.

and 12) which suggest to him Peripatetic arguments prompted by sceptical objections. He sees *Metaphysics* Little Alpha as an explicitly anti-sceptic address, observing that 'Aristotle would not have been troubled by the Sceptics to the extent that its author is' (p. 68). Like myself, Grayeff notes many Aristotelian texts which have parallels in Sextus Empiricus, but he differs completely from me in taking these to give evidence that their authors were post-Aristotelians who wrote in full awareness of the Pyrrhonists and Academic sceptics. I was not familiar with Grayeff's views when I originally wrote this study. His book seems to me to strengthen the claims I have made concerning Aristotle's anticipations of the official sceptics and his concern to protect his own procedures against sceptical challenges. But Grayeff's case for later Peripatetic references to sceptic (and Stoic and Epicurean) material within the corpus as a whole is not convincing (cf. Kerferd 1976, 212). One would expect much closer terminological similarity to the Hellenistic schools in the supposedly 'late' parts of the corpus, and it is more probable, on many grounds, that the parallels which do exist (outside such spurious works as *De mundo*) are due to Aristotle's influence on the Hellenistic schools.

POSTSCRIPT

Subsequent research on the topics of this study (anthologized in Irwin 1995, vol. 7) has tended to focus both on the historicity of Aristotle's interest in issues that come to the fore in Greek scepticism, and on his philosophical effectiveness in producing responses to sceptical challenges to knowledge.

Barnes 1986, after briefly supporting my historical proposals, argues at length that Aristotle 'committed himself to something which later thinkers could properly and plausibly describe as "a theory of the criterion"' (p. 54). What this involves, he argues, is a concept of perception that ties it teleologically to truth and an animal's survival. No more than I myself does Barnes conclude that this Aristotelian strategy offers a decisive refutation of scepticism. What it suggests to him (and with this I completely agree) is that it provides the material for an argument that is 'Aristotle's ultimate answer to the Sceptic. It is not an answer which, so far as we know, Aristotle ever explicitly gave. But it is an answer constructed, in a straightforward fashion, from propositions which are expressly asserted in the Aristotelian *corpus*. Moreover, these propositions are not casual asides. They are part of the hard centre of Aristotelian philosophy' (pp. 74–5).

Anagnostopoulos 1993 discusses much of my study point by point. He describes it as developing 'some of the most powerful arguments in support of the view that Aristotle was familiar with and was in his own work responding to some of the sceptical arguments' (p. 115). However, while granting that I have shown Aristotle's provision of material for constructing anti-sceptical arguments, Anagnostopoulos questions whether, if that were Aristotle's intention (which he is inclined to doubt), such arguments would meet the sceptical challenge. In response, I observe, first, that it was no part of my study's project to prove that Aristotle has a knock-down rejoinder to all sceptical challenges or even to all those advanced in antiquity. Second, as regards Aristotle's intentions, I don't think that Anagnostopoulos has taken the measure of the cumulative effect that the material in my paper reviews. He finds Aristotle showing no awareness of the need to provide a perceptual criterion of truth (pp. 119, 136), but if Barnes 1986 is right, as I think he is, Aristotle does offer an implicit criterion. We have no historical grounds for expecting Aristotle to do more than that, given the Hellenistic origin of that concept in its explicit form.

Around the time I was writing my study, three Italian scholars (Berti 1981*a*, Reale 1981, and Decleva Caizzi 1981, 152–5) drew attention to the apparent coincidences between Aristotle's criticism of those whom he takes to deny the principle of non-contradiction in *Metaphysics* Gamma and Aristocles' presentation of Pyrrho's main argument, according to Timon (see p. 54 above). For responses to one or more of them, see Stopper 1983, 266–8, and especially Bett 2000, 123–31 and 178–82. I agree with Stopper and Bett that it is hazardous to identify Aristotle's opponents specifically with the Megarians, and to hypothesize thereby a proleptic Aristotelian attack on Pyrrho. Bett also argues (pp. 129–30) that, notwithstanding the linguistic similarity I adduce between Aristotle and Aristocles (p. 54 above), the presence of the crucial words 'no more' in Aristocles but not in Aristotle makes 'the resemblance between Pyrrho's indeterminacy thesis and the position attacked by Aristotle not non-existent, but too broad to be historically significant' (p. 131).

A final decision on this issue is difficult because the interpretation of the Aristocles passage is itself very controversial. Bett takes it that the words 'no more' govern all of the alternatives that follow in that text, with Pyrrho's rule to be construed: 'saying concerning each thing that it no more (1) is than (2) is not or (3) both is and is not or (4) neither is nor is not.' If this is correct, we lose the parallel between Aristotle's opponents who say (unqualifiedly)

that the same thing 'is both thus and not thus' and the Aristocles passage, which, in Bett's interpretation, recommends saying that the same thing 'no more . . . both is and is not'. However, I doubt whether the Greek text admits of this construal. In which case, the Aristotelian connection continues to be well worth pondering. For a subtle discussion of the issue, see Hankinson 1995, 62–4, and for my own further thoughts on Pyrrho's position LS vol. 1, pp. 16–18.

I conclude with a couple of ancillary observations. In describing Aristotle's Protagoras as a subjectivist (pp. 53 and 60 above), I did not intend to take a stand on the question whether the historical figure should be so character-ized as distinct from being interpreted as a relativist. Recent scholarship has opted for making the historical Protagoras a relativist, but for doubts about this interpretation, see Fine 1998.

When proposing (p. 44 above) that Stoics and sceptics had 'probably' read all or most of the Aristotelian texts I discuss, I had not yet read Sandbach 1985, who argues that this material was probably not in circulation during the third and second centuries BC. If I had had advance warning of Sandbach's monograph, I would have expressed myself more cautiously. However, I do not think that his study undermines all influence of Aristotle's technical books on early Hellenistic philosophy; see my rejoinder to Sandbach in Long 1998*a*, 363–5.

4

Timon of Phlius: Pyrrhonist and satirist

I

Up to about 1970 the twentieth century was so begrudging to Timon of Phlius that he could have been forgiven for identifying himself with his misanthropic namesake. About 150 lines of his *Silloi* (lampoons), the work for which he was celebrated in antiquity, survive; yet in Lesky's standard *History of Greek Literature* (dated 1971) Timon receives only a third of the space devoted to Anaximander, from whom we possess one possible sentence.[1] Sustained philological work on Timon had largely ended with Diels (1901), whose collection of the fragments of the Greek philosopher poets was as difficult to come by as the older and much fuller study of Timon by Wachsmuth (1885).

The last few decades have done much to rectify this scholarly neglect.[2] Even so, it is fair to say that Timon has yet to receive his full due within the broad context of Greek intellectual history and literary study. Those who may have little or no interest in early Pyrrhonism are missing a lot if they are unfamiliar with Timon's extremely artful parodies of Homer and his Aristophanic versatility in coining new words.[3] Although I wrote the original article on which this chapter is based nearly thirty years ago, it remains, to the best of my knowledge, the most comprehensive study of Timon.

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[1] Lesky 1971, 195–6, 757. Yet Wilamowitz (1924, 224) had called the *Silloi* 'dazzling' (*glänzenden*).

[2] See the Postscript to this chapter. At the time I wrote the original version of this article, the principal philosophical accounts of Timon available to me were: Brochard 1923, Goedeckemeyer 1905, Robin 1944, Stough 1969, Dumont 1972, and Dal Pra 1975.

[3] The fragments of the *Silloi* include some sixty neologisms, many of which are comic formations: see Wachsmuth 1885, 203–4.

That earlier neglect of Timon was the more surprising because his subject-matter, the philosophy of Pyrrho, has never been short of attention. Pyrrho, however, wrote nothing, which means or should mean that systematic study of Timon, Pyrrho's principal publicist and younger contemporary, must be the first and most secure basis for discussion of Pyrrho's philosophy.[4] All Timon's surviving work is directly or indirectly a vindication of Pyrrho, and it is only when that material is properly considered that the groundwork can be laid for grasping Pyrrho's cultural and philosophical significance.[5] A question needs to be asked that is as simple as it is basic: is any ancient source about Pyrrho's life and thought uninfluenced by the writings of Timon? If the answer is negative, with only few qualifications, as I incline to believe, the study of Pyrrho must begin with the study of Timon. He stands even closer to Pyrrho than does Plato to Socrates.

The great German scholar Wilamowitz bears some responsibility for obscuring this relationship. In the influential book he published on the biographer Antigonus of Carystus, Wilamowitz (1881, 31) wrote: 'Everything essential that we find credible about Pyrrho's life we owe to Antigonus.' Wilamowitz thought he could show that the first chapters of Diogenes Laertius' Life of Pyrrho (9.61–9) were principally derived from a single source, a biography composed by Antigonus in about 225 BC, some

[4] In recent years, and indeed long before I wrote the original article, great attention has been paid to one particular testimony concerning Pyrrho that purports to go back to Timon. I refer to Eusebeius, *PE* 14.18.2–4 = LS 1F. For extensive discussions of this fundamental text, see now Brunschwig 1994a and Bett 2000, 14–48. Rather than discuss here the numerous interpretative issues it raises, I make just two points: (1) As Dumont 1972, 140–7 observes, Aristocles, who is Eusebius' source, is unlikly to be quoting Timon at first hand, because the passage ends with a reference to Aenesidemus; (2) I have no serious doubts that the passage is mainly an accurate report of Timon. It is likely that he wrote to this effect in his *Pytho*, a prose work describing Pyrrho's disposition (DL 9.67), where Timon is said to have defined the phrase 'no more' (*ou māllon*) in the words: 'determining nothing and suspending judgement' (DL 9.76 = LS 1G). Eusebius knew Timon's *Pytho* in whole or in summary; cf. *PE* 14.18.14–15 with discussion by Ferrari 1968, 208.

[5] Apart from the *Silloi*, with which I am largely concerned in this study, Timon praised Pyrrho's 'unique' and 'godlike' guidance of humankind in his *Indalmoi* (Images), written in elegiacs (DL 9.65, and Sextus Empiricus, *M* 1.305, 11.1 = LS 2D). Timon's question there about the source of Pyrrho's tranquillity is probably answered by 'Pyrrho' in Sextus, *M* 11.20 = LS 2E, on which see n. 13 below. (For a subtle discussion of the title *Indalmoi*, see Brunschwig 1990.) From Timon's prose work *On sensations*, the following sentence is cited (DL 9.105 = LS 1H): 'That honey is sweet I do not affirm, but I agree that it appears so.' Three other prose works are attested: *Against the physicists*, in which Timon seems to have challenged the procedure of 'assuming something on the basis of an hypothesis', anticipating a line of attack constantly used by Sextus Empiricus, who is the source of the citation (*M* 3.1); *Pytho*, on which see n. 4 above; and *Funeral feast of Arcesilaus* (DL 9.115), where Timon is said to have praised Arcesilaus, notwithstanding his criticism of him in the *Silloi* (see below, p. 90). For Timon's acquaintance with Lacydes, Arcesilaus' successor as head of the Academy, see Athenaeus 10.438a.

fifty years after Pyrrho's death. He also thought that this source lay behind the biographical information mediated by Eusebius (*PE* 14.18.26–8) and other ancient testimonies on Pyrrho. Wilamowitz's claims were endorsed by von Fritz (1963), who supported them by proposing that Antigonus had 'living memories' of Pyrrho from his pupils.[6] Perhaps so; but it is difficult to reconcile Diogenes Laertius' references (9.61, 66) to the obscure Ascanius of Abdera and to Erastosthenes with the hypothesis of Antigonus as his unitary source. Yet, even if Wilamowitz were right about that, there is a more telling point to be made against him. Much of the serious information recorded by Diogenes Laertius, including the gist of his biographical anecdotes, is supported by the extant fragments of Timon; and this suggests that Antigonus should be regarded as a compiler rather than a biographer of independent value.

Here, now, are examples of the many close correspondences between Timon and Diogenes Laertius. In DL 9.62 (LS 1A) Pyrrho is reported to have claimed that nothing is either fine or shameful, but human beings do everything on the basis of custom and convention; 'because each thing is no more this than that'. Timon says (fr. 844 = LS 1I): 'but these things are decided on the part of human beings by convention [or by intellect]', and Sextus Empiricus, the source of the line (*M* 11.140), cites it to support Pyrrho's claim that nothing is good or bad by nature;[7] DL 9.76 (LS 1G) confirms Timon's use of the formula 'no more'.[8] DL 9.64 (LS 1B) reports that many people envied Pyrrho his 'unconcernedness' (*apragmosynē*), and he supports this report by quoting from Timon's *Silloi* (fr. 48) five hexameter lines about 'Pyrrho's escape from servitude to the opinions and empty theorizing (*keneophrosynē*) of sophists', and three verses from the *Indalmoi*

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[6] Von Fritz does not properly distinguish between the writings of Timon, which were well known (cf. Sotion's commentary on the *Silloi*, Athenaeus 8.336d), and the oral testimony, if that is the word, of Philo of Athens (DL 9.67), a follower of Pyrrho whom Timon (fr. 50) described (as he also described, fr. 49, a further follower, Eurylochus), and Numenius (DL 9.68), whom some scholars have identified with the Middle Platonist philosopher. No written words about Pyrrho are quoted from any of his followers besides Timon. Ferrari 1981, 343, has criticized me for supposedly assuming complete correspondence between Pyrrho and Timon and for taking Timon's portrayal of Pyrrho to be uniform throughout his writings. To which I respond that I see no good reason to doubt the latter point, and, with respect to the former, that our Pyrrho must be largely and unavoidably Timon's Pyrrho.

[7] Fragment numbers of Timon's work, within the sequence 1–66, refer to the editions of the *Silloi* by Diels 1901 and di Marco 1989; those within the sequence 841–7 refer to fragments of his other works in the edition of Lloyd-Jones and Parsons 1981. I follow Hirzel 1877–83, vol. 3, 56 n., in emending the text of fr. 844 = (LS1I) from νόωι to νόμωι.

[8] See n. 4 above.

(fr. 841).⁹ In this latter excerpt Timon praises Pyrrho for his ease and imperturbability, and his *Silloi* (fr. 1 = DL9.112 = LS 3A) began with an invocation to all 'busybody (*polypragmones*) sophists'.¹⁰ DL 9.67 (LS 1C) states that Pyrrho liked to quote passages from Homer illustrating human 'inconsistency', 'futility' (*kenospoudon*), and 'childishness'. The fragments of Timon's *Silloi* exemplify these qualities: Pyrrho's 'complete consistency' (fr. 841 = LS 2D) is contrasted with others' behaviour (fr. 9), and *kenos* meaning futile is one of Timon's favourite words.¹¹ DL 9.68 reports an anecdote from Posidonius (F 287 Edelstein/Kidd) concerning Pyrrho's calm (*galēnos*) in a storm when his fellow travellers at sea were all disturbed. Timon (frs. 63–4) uses the word for calm (*galēnē*) in what is almost certainly a reference to Timon: 'And then I saw him in a calm, undisturbed by winds'.¹² Two sentences in DL's biography (9.63–4 = LS 1B) specify Pyrrho's concern with excellence: 'teaching anyone to be good', and 'training himself to be good'. Timon (fr. 842 = LS 2E) is probably Pyrrho's answer to a question by Timon (fr. 841 = LS 2D) about the causes of Pyrrho's equanimity, and it refers to 'the nature of the divine and the good'.¹³

⁹ These fragments correspond respectively to LS 2C and 2D.

¹⁰ Timon's line, which runs ἔσπετε νῦν μοι ὅσοι πολυπράγμονές ἐστε σοφισταί, is a parody of Homer, *Iliad* 2.284 (referring to the Muses) and also, perhaps, of Hesiod, *Theogony* 114–15.

¹¹ Cf. frs. 11, 20, 21, and 48 (cited above). Use of the word *kenospoudia* is attributed to Diogenes the Cynic (DL 6.26), and the two other negative qualities that Pyrrho illustrated from Homer recall Cynic epigrams (cf. 'Good men nowhere, good boys in Sparta', DL 6.27). It was familiar Cynic practice to quote or parody Homer, and I argue later that Timon draws heavily on the Cynics in his representation of Pyrrho.

¹² τὸν δ' ὡς οὖν ἐνόησ' ἐν νηνεμίηισι γαλήνης (fr. 64), which parodies Homer, *Odyssey* 11.575 and 5.392 = 12.169. This metaphorical use of γαλήνη is an ethical cliché, especially in Epicureanism; cf. Usener 1977, 150–2. DL 9.45 uses the adverb γαληνῶς in explaining Democritus' goal of εὐθυμία. Sextus, *PH* 1.10, combines γαληνότης with ἀοχλησία (cf. n. 39 below) in defining ἀταραξία, which is a still more familiar term shared by Epicureans and Pyrrhonists. Although Timon's two mentions of Epicurus are contemptuous (frs. 7 and 51), Epicurus himself is said to have admired Pyrrho (DL 9.64), and frequently enquired about him from Nausiphanes, who, before he influenced Epicurus, had been a follower of Pyrrho. In fact Pyrrho and Epicurus offered totally different routes to ἀταραξία, and the Epicureans opposed scepticism; see Barigazzi 1969. But this is consistent with a positive influence from Pyrrho on Epicurus' ethics; see Sedley 1976, 136–7; and, apart from their common interest in equanimity, the followers of both philosophers were alike in treating their leader as a quasi-divine and unique discoverer of its grounds.

¹³ I omit a long note in the original publication of this study (n. 16, pp. 84–5), in which I discussed the interpretation of fr. 842. The chief problem it presents is what to make of the claim by Pyrrho, the presumed subject, to have 'a correct rule' with respect to the nature of the divine and the good. In LS vol. 2, p. 11, we accept the interpretation of Burnyeat 1980, whose proposal concerning the punctuation of the passage removes its seeming attribution to Pyrrho of 'an independent and eternally existing nature', which would glaringly contradict his attested rejection of any objective values. Bett 1994 and 2000, 94–102, challenges this proposal, arguing *inter alia* that the speaker of the contested lines may not be Pyrrho. There is clearly more to be explored about

From Diogenes Laertius we learn little or nothing credible about
Pyrrho's lifestyle or attitudes that is not stated or implied by Timon.[14]
Where Diogenes usefully supplements Timon is on details about Pyrrho's
career—his association with Anaxarchus (DL 9.61 = LS 1A), an atomist
famous for his equanimity whom Timon (fr. 58) satirizes for combining
the appearance of 'Cynic strength' with hedonism;[15] his going, along with
Anaxarchus, on Alexander's expedition to India and consorting with the
Gymnosophists and Magi (ibid.); his admiration for Democritus and Homer
(which we might have inferred from Timon);[16] and the high regard in which
he was held by Elis, his native city, and by Nausiphanes and Epicurus as
well as numerous followers (9.64 = LS 1B). How many of such details
were included in Timon's lost writings we obviously cannot say. But the
correspondence between the relatively few fragments we have and the
Diogenes *Life* is close enough to support the remark by Sextus Empiricus
(*M* 1.53) that Timon was the 'spokesman' (*prophētēs*) of Pyrrho's views. In
all probability Antigonus of Carystus and any other biographers of Pyrrho
drew largely on the works of Timon, embellishing them with genuine and
apocryphal anecdotes to illustrate Pyrrho's character. It is equally probable
that, when Aenesidemus in the first century BC revived the name of Pyrrho
for his version of scepticism, the most authoritative source on which he could
draw was Timon.[17]

Robin (1944, 27) rightly drew a contrast between Pyrrho and Timon, but
he expressed it in a misleading way. Commenting on the differences between
the two men's careers, Robin contrasted Pyrrho's 'calm and moderation'
with Timon's reputed activities as dancer and sophist.[18] Timon, he wrote,
'was the perfect model of a type loathed by Pyrrho'; and he concluded that
Timon's enthusiasm for Pyrrho may have distorted the way in which he
represents him. Neither the moralizing nor the possible distortion seems to

this intriguing passage, on which see also Reale 1981, 306–15, Ferrari 1981, 358–61, Decleva
Caizzi 1981, 251–62, Stopper 1983, 270–1, and Brunschwig 1990.

[14] Notice that solitariness and talking to oneself, attributed to Pyrrho by DL 9.63–4, are credited
to his follower Philo of Athens by Timon fr. 50 = DL 9.69.

[15] Further details about Anaxarchus in DK vol. 2, 235–9. See also Dal Pra 1975, vol. 1, pp.
53–6 and von Fritz 1963, 94–5.

[16] DL 9.67, on the word of Philo of Athens. For Timon's praise of Democritus, see DL 9.40,
the source of fr. 46.

[17] That Aenesidemus wrote about Pyrrho's life as well as his philosophy is implied by DL 9.62.

[18] He refers to Timon's life, as described by DL 9.109–10, which drew both on Antigonus of
Carystus and Apollonides of Nicaea, who wrote a commentary on the *Silloi* in the first century AD.

me at all pertinent, but Robin was right to remind us that Timon was Pyrrho's interpreter and not his double.

However much or little Pyrrho was influenced by Indian fakirs, he may be aptly described as a guru, a type of wise man who turns up in the Greek world from the sixth century onwards and increasingly, it seems, in the second part of the fourth century. Timon by contrast was a many-sided professional teacher, a man thoroughly at home in the life of the Hellenistic intelligentsia.[19] Figures with whom Pyrrho has much in common, at least in Timon's characterization of him, are the Cynic Crates of Thebes and Stilpo of Megara. All three of these share a concern with self-sufficiency and equanimity which, in the opinion of our sources, they propagated as much by how they lived as by any formal teaching. The guru type of Greek philosopher, whose principal concerns are ethical, does not belong to a monolithic group. Stilpo, for instance, had strong interests in dialectic, which the Cynics did not share; and one may argue about whether Socrates, whose influence on the later gurus is certain, should be classed with them or not. What is quite clear is the sharp difference between the early Academic and Peripatetic concentration on systematic instruction and written exposition and the informal and more individualized teaching by the likes of Stilpo and Crates.

By the end of the fourth century, the early Academic and Peripatetic style of philosophizing looks like becoming the exception. Zeno and Epicurus have begun to establish their schools; the Academy appears to be concentrating on ethics;[20] the Cynics and the oral dialecticians are flourishing.[21] Only in the Peripatos is there a lively, albeit short-lived, continuation of scientific research. Yet, if the future of philosophy seems to lie with the individual who has a charismatic personality, a brilliant style of repartee, and a powerful ethical message, the sheer popularity of philosophy at this time and the range of available options inevitably influenced the way avant-garde philosophers and their disciples presented their views. This concern with self-presentation is particularly evident in the efforts many philosophers made to align themselves with authorities from the past, so as to appropriate a respectable tradition for themselves. The early Stoics' interest in Homer, Hesiod, and Heraclitus

[19] Note the tradition that Timon taught Aratus (*Suda*, sv Aratos), and the drinking party at which he and the Academic Lacydes commented on one another's alcoholic condition with quotations from Homer (Athenaeus 10.438a).

[20] See Dillon 1977, 39–43. I am not convinced by the interesting attempts of Krämer 1971 to demonstrate strong dialectical interests in the Academy at this time.

[21] See Sedley 1977.

is one example.[22] Another is Arcesilaus' claiming many pre-Socratics, as well as Socrates and Plato, as sceptical predecessors.[23] A further characteristic of the competing schools (too large and complex to illustrate here) is their borrowing terms and concepts from one another; and yet another common feature of the philosophical scene, stimulated by the same conditions, is intense criticism of contemporary rivals.[24] Nearly all these aspects of early Hellenistic philosophy are to be found in Timon's erudite, witty, and vituperative approach to the Greek philosophical tradition and Pyrrho's place in it.

II

Timon of Phlius was some twenty to thirty years old in 300–290 BC, the period in which Greek philosophy reached perhaps its maximum diversification and general influence on culture.[25] At about this time he went to Megara, where Stilpo was enjoying a considerable vogue. Timon was not the first man from Phlius to be attracted by Stilpo's renown. In 317/16 Asclepiades of Phlius persuaded Menedemus of Eretria to join him as a pupil with Stilpo; and Stilpo, admittedly on the word of another Megarian philosopher, is said to have drawn pupils away from Theophrastus and many other teachers.[26]

The links between Stilpo and Timon, on the evidence of highly fragmentary sources, are so striking that some over-simplification and contamination in the doxographical tradition may be suspected. Yet, there do appear to be genuinely close connections between them. Stilpo was a logician and a practical moralist. If Aristocles is to be trusted, he continued the Eleatic tendency of Megarian philosophers in asserting a strict monism and denying all change and motion.[27] Aristocles also attributes to Stilpo, along with

[22] See Long 1996/2001, chs. 2 and 3.

[23] See Cicero, *Acad.* 1.44 and Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 26.1121F.

[24] See Sedley 1976, whose excellent study illuminates my general point in the course of his showing that much of the abuse supposedly heaped by Epicurus on other philosophers has been misinterpreted and misattributed to him.

[25] The main evidence for Timon's dates is a report that he was nearly 90 when he died (DL 9.112); the inference from his *Funeral feast of Arcesilaus* (ibid. 116) that he outlived Arcesilaus, who died in about 241; and his being born early enough to have studied as a young unmarried man with Stilpo in Megara (DL 9.109). Stilpo is likely to have died by about 280; cf. Döring 1972, 140. So Timon was probably born no later than 310. Pyrrho's approximate dates are 360–270.

[26] DL 2.125–6 = fr. 170 Döring, and DL 2.113 = fr. 164A Döring. Our sources are divided on whether Stilpo left any written works. In one list of those who did not he is mentioned alongside Pyrrho among others (DL 1.16 = fr. 189 Döring), but DL 2.120 = fr. 187 Döring attributes to him 'nine frigid dialogues'.

[27] Ap. Euseb., *PE* 14.16.1 = fr. 27 Döring.

Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, and Melissus, the necessary condemnation of sense-perceptions and impressions (*phantasiai*) and confidence in 'reason alone'. No fragment of Timon refers to Stilpo by name, but Stilpo's Eleatic predecessors (according to Aristocles) are among the few philosophers, apart from Pyrrho, who are partly or wholly exempted from criticism in the *Silloi*.

Xenophanes' role in Timon's work was central (see further p. 85). He responded to Timon's questions about the philosophers in its second and third books (DL 9.111 = LS 3A), and it is probably Xenophanes who says: 'And mighty Parmenides, high-minded and not given to multiple opinions, who removed the processes of thought from the deception of appearance',[28] and 'Zeno unfailingly powerful with his two-edged tongue, who trapped everyone, and Melissus superior to many illusions and vanquished by few'.[29] Later Pyrrhonism made no exception of reason in its rejection of any demonstrable criterion of truth, and this was presumably Timon's position as well. But what he primarily attacks in the *Silloi* are precisely *doxai*, pretentious and unjustified claims to truth.[30] We may take it as certain that Timon sought to present Xenophanes and the Eleatics as closer to the ideal Pyrrho than the 'busybody sophists' summoned at the opening of his first book.[31] Here, then, we have the first mark of Stilpo's probable influence.

Only a little is known about Stilpo's detailed contributions to logic and metaphysics. He is one of many philosophers reputed to have rejected Platonic Forms, on the ground that a general term such as 'man' refers to nothing since it refers neither to this man nor that one; and his argument includes the Pyrrhonist jargon, 'why this one rather than that one?'[32] He is said to have claimed that one thing cannot be predicated of another unless subject

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[28] Fr. 44 = DL9.22 = LS 3H: Παρμενίδου τε βίην μεγαλόφρονος οὐ πολύδοξον | ὅς ρ † ἐπὶ † φαντασίας ἀπάτης ἀνενείκατο νώσεις. Plausible corrections for ἐπί, which gives quite the wrong sense for Parmenides' thought, are Wachsmuth's ἀπὸ or, as I have suggested, ἐκ.πολύδοξον appears to be a coinage by Timon, alluding to Parmenides' ἔθος πολύπειρον (DK 28 B7.3–5), in the lines quoted by DL *ad loc.*, and the erroneous opinions of mortals (DK 28 B1.30, 8.51). Timon's praise of Parmenides (probably spoken, however, by Xenophanes, see below p. 87) recalls his eulogy of Pyrrho (fr. 48). His usage of φαντασία can be read as enlisting Parmenides as an enemy of Epicurean and Stoic empiricism.

[29] Fr. 45 = DL9.25 = LS 3I. Timon's description of Zeno with the neologism ἀμφοτερόγλωσσος was much quoted by later philosophers; cf. Diels 1901 *ad loc.* Wachsmuth 1885, 98, interprets the term as a reference both to Zeno's dilemmas and to the tradition that Zeno was the inventor of dialectic. Timon's comment on Melissus may be inspired by DK 30 B8.

[30] Cf. frs. 11, 12, 19, 20, 48, 54, 57, 60, 66.

[31] For further discussion of Timon's treatment of the Eleatic tradition, see di Marco 1993.

[32] DL 2.119 = fr. 199 Döring. Similar criticism of Platonic Forms is attributed to Antisthenes (frs. 50A and C Decleva Caizzi) and Diogenes the Cynic (DL 6.53), which proves that it was regarded as a characteristic Cynic position, whether true of Stilpo or not.

and predicate are identical. Non-identical predication is disallowed because it supposedly detaches the subject from itself: in '(a) man is good' either good is the same as man, in which case good cannot be predicated of food; or it is different from man, in which case it is false to say that man is good.[33]

We might not expect Timon to have taken an interest in such logical puzzles, but the one purely conceptual doctrine attributed to him has a thoroughly Megarian ring: 'In a time that lacks parts nothing that has parts can happen, such as coming to be, perishing, and everything similar.' Sextus Empiricus cites this doctrine in two contexts where he argues that time is non-existent, whether we make it divisible or indivisible.[34] It is impossible to know whether Timon advanced this claim as a substantive thesis, which seems unlikely, or as part of a dialectical argument. In the latter case, he might have been proposing a Zenonian dilemma; or he might have been refuting attempts to combine temporal atomism with 'infinitely divisible bodies and places', a doctrine attributed to Strato.[35] In any case, Timon's comment on time and change exhibits just the kind of interest a pupil of Stilpo might have developed, and it sets him within a regular talking-point of contemporary dialectic.

However, it is in ethics and in terminology that the correspondences between Timon and Stilpo are particularly striking. The most widely attested anecdote about Stilpo concerns his equanimity and rationality during the destruction of Megara, his homeland, by Demetrius Poliorketes in 308/7.[36] Stilpo lost all his property, but when challenged about this is alleged to have said that 'he had lost nothing that belonged to him, since no one had removed his education, and he still had his reason and understanding'.[37] The Cynic style of this response is confirmed by many other reports of Stilpo—his freedom (fr. 172), self-control (fr. 158), self-sufficiency (fr. 195), and his teaching that exile is not an evil (fr. 192). Plutarch records Stilpo's reputation for mildness and moderation (*metriopatheia*).[38] The first of these

[33] Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1119C–D, 23.1120A–B, Simplicius, *In phys.* 120.12–17 Diels = frs. 197–8 Döring. Whether the same doctrine should be attributed to Antisthenes and also to Menedemus is controversial: cf. Guthrie 1969, 209–18, and Döring 1972, 154–5. Plato, *Soph.* 251c, ridicules the view of those who 'insist that we must not say a man is good, but only good is good and man is man'. This is identical to Stilpo's position, as reported by Plutarch, and strengthens its authenticity as Megarian doctrine.

[34] *M* 6.66, 10.197 = LS 3m and Diels fr. 76, who attributes the fragment to Timon's work *Against the physicists* (n. 5 above). For discussion of it, see Decleva Caizzi 1984.

[35] By Sextus, *M* 10.155. His accuracy is aptly questioned by Sedley 1977, 89 and n. 83, who suggests an influence on Timon from the Megarian Diodorus Cronus (pp. 84–9).

[36] Frs. 151A–I Döring.   [37] DL 2.115 = fr. 151A Döring.

[38] *Adv. Col.* 22.1119C = fr. 197 Döring.

attributes is given by Diogenes Laertius (9.108) as an alternative goal for the sceptics to 'impassivity' (*apatheia*). The second one is stated by Sextus Empiricus (*PH* 1.30) to be the sceptics' goal in matters over which we have no control. Another relevant term, attributed to the Megarians in general, is *aochlēsia*, 'freedom from distress', a virtual synonym of *ataraxia*. It is recorded as their candidate for the 'primary object of human impulse' (*prōton oikeion*), and even if the word *aochlēsia* has been anachronistically applied to them it associates them with the equanimity that Timon singles out as Pyrrho's supreme quality.[39]

The question of the real Pyrrho's links with the Megarians need not be of any relevance here.[40] Moreover, the Megarians collectively, unlike the Eleatics, are attacked in the *Silloi* for their contentiousness: 'But I do not care for these babblers, nor for any other (Socratic), not for Phaedo, whoever he was, nor for quarrelsome Eucleides, who implanted in the Megarians a frenzied love of contention.'[41] Given the absence of Stilpo's name from the surviving *Silloi*, we cannot know whether Timon explicitly exempted him from attack. Conceivably he was no more sparing of him than was Crates of Thebes, a further pupil of Stilpo, who mocked his old teacher for his pretentious and worthless disputation;[42] and Timon himself dismisses Menedemus, another of Stilpo's students, as a 'supercilious blusterer'.[43] My point is not to suggest that Timon treated Stilpo respectfully in his writings, but that he found it appropriate (which is not to say historically accurate) to praise Pyrrho for qualities that were also strongly associated with Stilpo.[44]

[39] Ps.-Alexander Aphr. *De an.* 2.150, 34–5 Bruns = fr. 196 Döring. The reliability of this evidence is questionable, as Döring notes. It forms part of a list of philosophers' views on the πρῶτον οἰκεῖον which, originating as a Stoic concept, becomes an *omnium gatherum* term in late philosophical writers. But the history of ἀοχλησία is very relevant to Pyrrhonism. That noun and its corresponding adjective probably originate in Epicureanism; cf. Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 127 and *Sent. Vat.* 79, and Posidonius F 187 Edelstein/Kidd. Possibly via Timon, ἀοχλησία came to be used in later Pyrrhonism in a way that recalls Epicureanism; cf. Sextus, *PH* 1.10 and 29.

[40] See LS vol. 2, pp. 1–2, and Döring 1972, 157–63.

[41] Fr. 28 = DL2.107 = fr. 8 Döring: ἀλλ' οὔ μοι τούτων φλεδόνων μέλει· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλου| οὐδενός, οὐ Φαίδωνος, ὅτις γένετ', οὐδ' ἐριδαντέω| Εὐκλείδεω, Μεγαρεῦσιν ὃς ἔμβαλε λύσσαν ἐρισμοῦ. The word φλέδων, which Timon also applies to the Socratic Antisthenes (fr. 37 = DL 6.18), is attested elsewhere only in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1195, where Cassandra challenges the Chorus to call her ψευδόμαντις, θυροκόπος φλέδων. The similar word φλήναφος is more common, and attested as used by Diogenes the Cynic (DL 6.27).

[42] I quote Crates' lines below.

[43] Fr. 29 = DL 2.126: ὠφρυωμένος, ἀφροσιβόμβαξ. Timon also satirized Menedemus in fr. 31 (see below), and his follower Ctesibius in fr. 16 = Athenaeus 4.162e.

[44] Dal Pra 1975, vol. 1, pp. 88–9, recognizes that Timon's teaching was indebted to Stilpo, but he does not consider the evidence I have discussed.

III

Marriage followed Timon's sojourn with Stilpo. He then, with his wife, joined Pyrrho at Elis (DL 9.109). It is impossible for us to know the extent of Pyrrho's reputation at this time (say, 295–290 BC), nor can we say just why Timon went to him. Some scholars have thought that Timon's lost dialogue *Pytho* recounted his first meeting with Pyrrho at a shrine of Amphiaraus in Phlius when Pyrrho was supposedly on his way to Delphi.[45] Others, much more plausibly, have treated the meeting as a literary fiction.[46] I am tempted to speculate that Timon's connecting Pyrrho with Delphi was an attempt to recall the oracular response to Chaerephon's famous question about the wisdom of Socrates, and to represent Pyrrho's refusal to dogmatize about the objective nature of anything as the height of contemporary wisdom.[47] The *Pytho* was probably Timon's earliest work on Pyrrho.[48]

Timon may have stayed in Elis until Pyrrho's death in about the year 270. Then, 'finding himself without a livelihood' (DL 9.110), he worked as a sophist in Chalcedon, where he made enough money to retire to Athens for the rest of his life. What his sophistry involved is difficult to say, but the success of the Cynics at this date, and the strong Cynic elements in Timon's verses, suggest that his lectures included standard Cynic themes. In addition to Stilpo's moralizing influence the Cynics are directly and emphatically reflected in Timon's poetic style, thought, and language.

This important point was well recognized by Wachsmuth (1885, 72), but it was almost completely ignored by subsequent writers on Timon and early Pyrrhonism. I will first exemplify words and ideas that Timon shares with the Cynics, and then comment on his following in their footsteps with his parody of Homer and his mock-seriousness (*spoudaiogeloion*).

Here, to begin, is a list of pejorative terms in Timon that have a distinctively Cynic trademark. *Typhos*, meaning inflated nonsense, often in reference to self-importance and self-deception, was a constant theme of Cynic

[45] So Wachsmuth 1885, 11–12, citing Pausanias 2.13.7, followed by Goedeckemeyer 1905, 20. For this episode in the *Pytho*, see Aristocles ap. Euseb., *PE* 14.18.14 = Diels 1901 fr. 77.

[46] So Diels 1901 in his commentary to fr. 77, supported by Untersteiner 1954, who suggests that Timon located his meeting with Pyrrho at a shrine of Amphiaraus in order to parallel the tradition of the seer's advice to his son.

[47] If Wilamowitz 1881, 38, was right to locate the shrine of Amphiaraus at Oropus in Attica, it may have been that famous oracle which Pyrrho (or Timon) was consulting.

[48] For the little that is known of its contents, see n. 4 above.

discourse.[49] Pyrrho in Timon, by contrast with the erratic mass of people, is *atyphos* (free from inflation), while the Stoic Zeno is 'a greedy old Phoenician woman in her swarthy *typhos*, desiring everything'.[50] Timon pays Xenophanes the back-handed complement of being 'half-uninflated' (*hypatyphos*), and it is probably Xenophanes who describes himself in the *Silloi* as preferring the 'thin dry shell of the Greeks' as his 'non-luxurious' menu (*aperisso-truphētos*).[51] The Cynics preached the need to avoid 'luxury' (*truphē*), which Crates identified, along with extravagance, as the prime source of all civic discord.[52] In Timon Aristippus is credited with a luxurious nature (*trupherē physis*).[53] As virtual synonyms of *typhos* the Cynics used the words 'conceit' (*oiēsis*) and 'vacuity' (*kenodoxia*), and Timon combines these terms in his graphic line: 'human skin-bags stuffed with empty conceit.'[54] He praises Pyrrho for discovering release from the servitude of 'opinions' (*doxai*) and the 'empty-mindedness' (*keneophrosynē*) of sophists.[55]

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that there are Cynic supports for every moral judgement, whether good or bad, that Timon makes in the *Silloi* and his other verses. His attack on the intellectuals of the Alexandrian Museum and on learning generally,[56] his criticism of scholarly controversy,[57] his censure of *doxa* in the two senses of fame and (worthless) belief and of desire (*epithumia*);[58] more specifically, Timon's criticism of Prodicus

[49] See DL 6.7 for Antisthenes, 6.26 for Diogenes, 6.85–6 for Crates, 6.83 for Monimus = Menander, fr. 215 Sandbach, a passage that appeals to common knowledge of the Cynics (cf. Sextus, *M* 8.5); ὀλβιότυφος DL 4.52 for Bion = Kindstrand 1976 F 7, and see his p. 195 for further references and bibliography. τῦφος and τυφόω are applied disparagingly to 'dogmatists' by Sextus, *PH* 1.62, 193, 237, *M* 1.55.

[50] Fr. 9 = Aristocles ap. Euseb., *PE* 14.18.19, referring to Pyrrho: ἀλλ' οἷον τὸν ἄτυφον ἐγὼ ἴδον ἠδ' ἀδάμαστον| πᾶσιν...; fr. 38 = DL 7.15 referring to Zeno: καὶ φοίνισσαν ἴδον λιχνόγραυν σκιερῷ ἐνὶ τυφῷ| πάντων ἱμείρουσαν, on which see below. For ἀτυφία cf. Antisthenes fr. 97A Decleva Caizzi and Bion F16A Kindstrand.

[51] Fr. 60 = Sextus, *PH* 1.224 and fr. 3 = Athenaeus 4.159d. Both terms are neologisms.

[52] Cf. Plutarch, *De tuenda sanitate* 125F, and for other references see Kindstrand 1976, 218.

[53] Fr. 27 = DL 2.66.

[54] Fr. 11 = Aristocles ap. Euseb. *PE* 18.14.28: ἄνθρωποι κενεῆς οἰήσιος ἔμπλεοι ἀσκοί. Cf. also Timon frs. 20, 53. For the Cynic background, see Kindstrand 1976, 221, and note that Sextus, *M* 8.5, glosses τῦφος by οἴησις.

[55] Fr. 48 = DL 9.64; cf. Crates' 'free kingdom of those unenslaved to pleasure', fr. 7 Diehl.

[56] Fr. 12 = Athenaeus 1.22d and fr. 62 = Sextus, *M* 1.53. For Cynic attacks on philosophers and learning, cf. DL 6.11, 27–8, 101, 103–4, Bion F 3–10 Kindstrand, Wachsmuth 1885, 66–7, and Dudley 1937.

[57] On ἔρις in frs. 21–2, see below; cf. Crates' use of ἐρίζεσκεν in reference to Stilpo, fr. 3 Diehl = DL 2.118, and Bion's attribution of ὑπάτη ἔρις to Archytas by Bion F7 Kindstrand = DL 4.52.

[58] Censure of *doxa* in frs. 9, 48, 50, 57, and for Cynics, see Kindstrand 1976, 223. In fr. 71 Diels = Athenaeus 8.337a Timon characterizes *epithumia* as 'the first of all evils'.

for avarice,[59] of the Stoic Zeno's disciple Persaeus as a flatterer (*kolax*),[60] of Arcesilaus for playing to the crowd[61]—all these and similar failings belong to the Cynic repertoire of castigation.

The common ground between Timon and the Cynics is much too extensive to be explained as being merely due to an ethical consensus among philosophers who have nothing else that unites them. Any doubts on that score must be resolved when we review the form of Timon's *Silloi*. These poems, notwithstanding their eponymous allegiance to the work of Xenophanes, have a much more immediate model in the work of Timon's older contemporary, the Cynic philosopher Crates of Thebes.

Only a score or so of lines from his hexameter parodies of Homer have survived, but three independent fragments of these (3–5 Diehl) completely anticipate Timon's *Silloi* in style and content. Here is fr. 3 (= DL 2.118): 'Next I looked on Stilpo suffering grievously in his palace/Megara, where they say is the bed of Typhoeus. He kept disputing there, and many comrades were around him. They wasted time on pursuing virtue purely by the letter.' Crates' first sentence before the words 'in Megara' is an exact replica of *Odyssey* 11.582, with the name Stilpo substituted for Homer's Tantalus.[62] 'And I saw (so and so)' is a stock introduction for Odysseus' encounter with the various shades in the underworld. Crates repeats the expression in another passage (fr. 5), where the person seen may not be a philosopher, but he also alludes (fr. 4) to two philosopher friends Asclepiades and Menedemus, and probably introduced them with the same formula. We can be certain, then, that some of Crates' verses were a parody of Odysseus' celebrated visit to the underworld in book 11 of the *Odyssey*. Timon clearly followed suit: he uses the same 'And I saw (so and so)' formula in two of his *Silloi* (frs. 9 and 28), and it seems certain that he situated his philosophers, most if not all of whom were dead at the time he wrote, in a mock-heroic underworld setting.[63]

The Greek art of Homeric parody drew much of its appeal from its ingenuity in mixing different contexts of the original. Crates' second line in the

[59] Fr. 18 = Athenaeus 9.406e: λαβάργυρος ὡρολογήτης, playing on the title of Prodicus' famous work *Horai*; cf. the Cynic Diogenes' description of avarice as the metropolis of all evils, DL 6.50 and 6.28.

[60] Fr. 6 = Athenaeus 6.251b; for Cynics, cf. DL 6.51, 92.

[61] ὀχλοάρεσκος fr. 34 = DL 4.42; for Cynics cf. DL 6.34, and Stobaeus, *Ecl*. 3.14.20.

[62] Cf. Plato, *Prot*. 315b9 and c8, where Socrates mockingly applies the Homeric formula to meeting Hippias and Prodicus at the house of Callias, using the name Tantalus in reference to the latter. Crates' 'in Megara' is a pun on the Homeric ἐν μεγάροισι.

[63] This is an old suggestion, now thoroughly explored and largely justified by Ax 1991, who (pp. 186–7) tabulates many of Timon's parodies with their Homeric originals.

above excerpt takes all but the words 'in Megara' from *Iliad* 2.783, the context of which is the catalogue of Achaean heroes. Homer describes the location of the Sicilian Typhoeus (Mt Etna) 'in Arima', for which Crates cleverly substitutes 'in Megara'. Thus he gets a double pun, alluding to Stilpo's Megara by the Homeric homonym, meaning palace, and to Stilpo's inflatedness (*typhos*), with a parody of the Sicilian monster Typhoeus (hot air). Crates' third line is drawn in part from *Iliad* 8.537, 'many comrades were around him', leaving only the fourth as an original verse, which makes the Homeric travesties thoroughly incongruous by its Cynic debunking of theoretical ethics.

In the *Silloi* Timon uses exactly these techniques. Like Crates, he may change only a word or two of the Homeric text in consecutive lines. To describe the battle of words between philosophers, he draws on the beginning of the *Iliad* (1.8–10), where Homer asks his muse to tell him which god initiated the strife between Agamemnon and Achilles. Where Homer has 'son of Leto and Zeus', Timon writes: 'Echo's thronging crowd'; and in place of Homer's 'angered with the king, he aroused harmful sickness throughout the host', Timon has: 'angered at their silence, it (Echo) aroused against the men a chattering sickness.'[64] As in Crates, the Homeric context as well as the intermittent substitution of metrically equivalent but incongruous words makes the satirical point. Or the parody may be more subtle, as with: 'Amongst them, crying like a cuckoo, rose Heraclitus, who reviled the crowd, the riddler.'[65] Here Timon largely alters both context and content of the Homeric original—Nestor's standing up to mediate between Agamemnon and Achilles.[66] But the opening and end of Timon's first line and the same verb in the same position in the second line clearly identify his Homeric model. For Homer's 'sweet-tongued speaker rose' he substitutes 'riddler rose', and thus completely changes the tone of the original. Yet, in his praise of Pyrrho, Timon merely replaces Homer's mention of Odysseus, in order to have himself or Xenophanes say: 'No other mortal could rival Pyrrho.'[67]

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[64] Fr. 22 = Clem. Alex., *Strom.* 5.1.11, II p. 333 Stählin: τίς γὰρ τούσδ᾽ ὀλοῆι ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι;| Ἠχοῦς σύνδρομος ὄχλος. ὁ γὰρ σιγῶσι χολωθεὶς| νοῦσον ἐπ᾽ ἀνέρας ὦρσε λάλην, ὀλέχοντο δὲ πολλοί. Diels *ad loc.* well compares Ἠχοῦς ὄχλος with the 'chorus' of Protagoras' followers in Plato (n. 61 above). Timon fr. 47 = DL 9.52 characterizes Protagoras as ἐριζέμεναι εὖ εἰδώς.

[65] Fr. 43 = DL 9.6: τοῖς δ᾽ ἔνι κοκκυστής, ὀχλολοίδορος Ἡράκλειτος,| αἰνικτὴς ἀνόρουσε.

[66] *Iliad* 1.247–8: τοῖσι δὲ Νέστωρ| ἡδυεπὴς ἀνόρουσε, λιγὺς Πυλίων ἀγορητής.

[67] Fr. 8 = Aristocles ap. Euseb., *PE* 18.17.17: οὐκ ἂν δὴ Πύρρωνί γ᾽ ἐρίσσειεν βροτὸς ἄλλος. Homer, *Iliad* 3.223: οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτ᾽ Ὀδυσῆϊ κτλ.

It was certainly Cynic practice, beyond Crates' satirical verses, to ridicule other philosophers. Diogenes' attacks on Plato are well known, and Bion of Borysthenes, who was about Timon's age, launched sardonic criticism against philosophers and intellectuals in general.[68] With his uninhibited and hyperbolical language and the form and content of his *Silloi*, Timon must have intended his readers to recognize a close affinity between his critique of high culture and that of the Cynics. But we should not draw the conclusion that Timon wished to represent Pyrrho as a card-carrying Cynic philosopher, bearing in mind the Cynics' at least partial allegiance to Socrates. Although none of the surviving *Silloi* attacks Diogenes or any contemporary Cynic by name—which is indeed quite telling—Socrates himself and his non-Academic followers, including the proto-Cynic Antisthenes, are satirized.[69] As I remarked earlier, the Megarians, in spite of the common ground between Timon and Stilpo, are not spared. While Timon's ethical judgements accord so well with familiar Cynic preaching, there are also many distinctive Cynic attitudes that he does not endorse in the extant material. These include the mendicant lifestyle, the appeal to non-human animals in the critique of human culture, the cult of shamelessness (*anaideia*), the focus on hardiness, and above all the appeal to reject convention (*nomos*) in favour of nature (*physis*), which seems completely at variance with Pyrrho's anti-objectivism and insistence on the governance of convention (DL 9.61 = LS 1A).

Timon, then, drew strongly but selectively on Cynicism, opting for those Cynic themes that would enable him to highlight Pyrrho's unique wisdom and unparalleled equanimity. This eclecticism, I suggest, was central to his literary mission. He decided that, in order to maximize Pyrrho's claims to be the wisest man of the age, he had to draw the fire of his main contemporary rivals; hence he represented Pyrrho as someone to whom Cynics and would-be Cynics could give allegiance without facing an explicit challenge from himself to their distinctively non-Pyrrhonean postures.

Timon's careful negotiation of Cynicism was overlooked by Dal Pra (1975, vol. 1, pp. 58–9), who argued that the biographical tradition on Pyrrho, as

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[68] See Kindstrand 1976 T 22–3 and F 3–10.

[69] Socrates (fr. 25 = DL 2.19) is 'a chatterer about laws' (ἐννομολέσχης), the wizard of Greece ('Ελλήνων ἐπαοιδός), 'one who makes men quibble' (ἀκριβολόγους ἀποφήνας); and Timon has a dig at Socrates' fluency and irony in the remarkable words: μυκτὴρ ῥητορόμυκτος, ὑπαττικὸς εἰρωνευτής. For Timon's description of Antisthenes, see n. 41 above. Other Socratics are attacked in frs. 26–8.

mediated by the likes of Antigonus and Eratosthenes, had been directly influenced by the Cynic–Stoic diatribe. If I am right, the Cynic characterization of Pyrrho is due primarily to Timon and *his* recourse to Cynic literature.[70] Was Pyrrho an epistemological sceptic or an austere moralist teaching the complete indifference of all conventional values, or both of these at once, whether consistently or not? It is not my brief in this study to give a detailed response to these fundamental questions, except by observing that adequate answers to them can scarcely sidestep the Cynic colours of Timon's palette.[71]

This is not to say that there was no direct influence from the Cynics on Pyrrho himself. Even if he had not been familiar with them before he went to India, he must have become acquainted there with Diogenes' follower Onesicritus, who was also a member of Alexander's expedition. As Onesicritus interpreted a group of Indian fakirs as Cynics, so Pyrrho may have gone one better and seen them as forerunners of his own developing position, whatever that was.[72]

IV

Although the Cynic Crates was Timon's immediate model for his *Silloi*, there is no evidence that Crates called his 'lampoons' (*paignia*, DL 6.85) by that name. Timon's more distant model was Xenophanes, and it is Xenophanes with whom he primarily aligns himself. This is proved both by the title *Silloi* and by the special place Timon assigns to Xenophanes in his work. Whether or not this literary title goes back to Xenophanes himself, there is no reason to doubt that his satirical verses had come to be called 'squint-eyed' (*silloi*) by Timon's day.[73] Most, if not all, of Xenophanes' extant lines in hexameters, as distinct from elegiacs, may be presumed to belong to this set. These include his

[70] Cf. Dudley 1937, 107–8, who says: 'Were it not for his exposition of the philosophy of Pyrrho, we should class Timon with Menippus as the outstanding literary representation of the Cynic nihilism.'

[71] Thus a selective reading of Timon may well be responsible for giving currency to the Ciceronian judgement of Pyrrho's affinity to Aristo's doctrine of the complete indifference of everything except virtue and vice; on which see LS vol. 2, p. 21, and in more detail Ausland 1989, 378–87. In this chapter's Postscript I briefly return to the question of how to identify Pyrrho's stance.

[72] For Onescritus' Indian encounters, see Strabo 15.1.63–5. Another Cynic for mention in relation to Pyrrho is Monimus of Syracuse (see n. 48 above), whom Sextus (*M* 8.5) describes as one 'who perhaps said that nothing is true, in declaring that all things are trumpery' (*typhos*). Whether or not there were actual connexions between Pyrrho and Monimus, the latter is paired by Sextus (*M* 7. 87–8) with Anaxarchus, because both of them likened reality to theatrical illusions, and Anaxarchus was Pyrrho's early mentor (DL 9.61) and fellow traveller to India.

[73] For evidence on the term and its history, see Wachsmuth 1885.

well-known attack on Homer and Hesiod for their unethical representation of the gods, his burlesque demonstration of how cultural relativism influences peoples' theologies, and, most importantly for our purposes, his claim that no human being has had or will ever have a clear and knowledgeable view of Xenophanes' theological and other topics: 'For even if one chanced to give a complete statement of what has transpired, yet one does not know it for oneself; but seeming (or opinion/*dokos*) is fashioned over everything.'[74] These lines may well have been the inspiration for Timon's assertion in his work entitled 'Images' (*Indalmoi*): 'But the appearance prevails everywhere, wherever one goes.'[75]

Whatever may have been the historical antecedents of Pyrrho's 'scepticism', Timon marks out the special position of Xenophanes. What made them kindred spirits in his eyes, we may infer, was not only Xenophanes' insistence on human cognitive limitations, but also his criticism of the praise accorded to athletic prowess and Lydian luxuriousness, and above all, his mockery of Pythagoras and probably other contemporary pundits.[76]

Xenophanes played a role in the *Silloi* comparable to that of Virgil in Dante's *Inferno*. Like the virtuous pagan, he falls short of the ideal, in this case Pyrrho, but his scepticism, though flawed, is praiseworthy and justifies his being chosen to guide Timon in his encounters with the other deceased philosophers. The first book of *Silloi* was a monologue by Timon himself. 'The second and third books have the form of dialogue. Timon appears questioning Xenophanes of Colophon about every philosopher, and Xenophanes describes them to him; in the second book he deals with the older philosophers, with the later ones in book three.'[77]

Timon's two surviving fragments referring to Xenophanes are quoted by Sextus Empiricus in a context where he maintains that even someone who makes a single dogmatic statement differs from a Pyrrhonist.[78] He illustrates this by citing Timon's treatment of Xenophanes: 'Having frequently praised him, even to the point of dedicating his *Silloi* to him, he made him grieve in the following words: "If only I had achieved a stalwart intellect, by looking both ways at once! But taking a treacherous road I was deceived,

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[74] DK 21B 34.3–4.

[75] Fr. 69 Diels = DL 9.105: ἀλλὰ τὸ φαινόμενον πάντη σθένει, οὗπερ ἂν ἔλθῃ. For the interpretation of the line, see LS vol. 2, pp. 8–9.

[76] DK 21 B 2–3, and DL 8.36, 9.18.

[77] DL 9.111, probably drawing on the commentary by Apollonides of Nicaea, dedicated to the emperor Tiberius, which Diogenes cites at the beginning of his life of Timon (9.109).

[78] *PH* 1.223–4 = frs. 59–60.

old though I was and forgetting all critical attitude." '[79] Xenophanes then confesses his elderly error: it consisted in the conviction that 'all existence is reduced to a uniform sameness'. Next (fr. 60) Sextus reports that Timon called Xenophanes 'half-inflated' (*hypatyphos*) because, though he mocked Homer's deceptions—for which he is praiseworthy—he also fabricated a non-anthropomorphic, uniform, and motionless divinity. Timon's curious epithet 'half-inflated' is a back-handed compliment. The only philosopher whom Timon judges to have been fully 'uninflated' is Pyrrho (fr. 9). Xenophanes, then, in spite of his dogmatic lapse, had once been on the high road to Pyrrhonism.

If, as seems certain, Xenophanes came closest in Timon's work to the ideal wisdom he assigns to Pyrrho, that gives us a basis for evaluating the few seemingly positive comments in the *Silloi* on other philosophers. I have suggested that the lines praising the Eleatics were spoken by Xenophanes rather than by Timon himself; in which case we need not suppose that he endorsed them. That he did not, or did not wholeheartedly do so, is strongly suggested by a brilliant proposal made by di Marco (1993). He observes that Xenophanes' confession of dogmatic error is precisely couched in the language of Parmenides' uncompromising monism, and that this Eleatic allusion is also indicated by Xenophanes' taking a 'treacherous road', which invokes Parmenides' motif of roads of enquiry. Timon was no doubt familiar with the tradition, older than Plato, that Eleatic monism began with Xenophanes.[80] Here, it seems, Timon offers a complex alternative story. Rather than have Xenophanes inspire Parmenides, he reverses the line of influence. Xenophanes, in Timon's story, starts his career as a would-be sceptic, but ends it by being corrupted by Parmenides.

With the doxographer Sotion, writing shortly after Timon's death, we find the beginnings of a tradition that makes Xenophanes 'the first to say everything is incomprehensible'.[81] The language of this claim has been influenced by Academic debates with Stoics, but it is highly probable that the chief proponent of Xenophanes' primordial 'scepticism' was none other than Timon.[82]

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[79] Fr. 59 di Marco's text: ὡς καὶ ἐγὼν ὄφελον πυκινοῦ νόου ἀντιβολῆσαι| ἀμφοτερόβλεπτος· δολίῃ δ' ὁδῷ ἐξαπατήθην| πρεσβυγενὴς τότ' ἐὼν καὶ ἀμενθήριστος ἁπάσης| σκεπτοσύνης. The last word does not mean scepticism in the later technical sense.

[80] See Mansfeld 1987, 302.

[81] DL 9.20. For the later tradition, see Mansfeld 1987, 295–8.

[82] Here I agree with di Marco 1993, 1017, and Brunschwig 1999, 234–5. Mansfeld 1987, 295, conjectures that it is Arcesilaus who claimed Xenophanes as a sceptical predecessor. He may have

We should presume that it is also Xenophanes, and not Timon, who says in the *Silloi*: 'Such was wise Democritus, shepherd of discourses, undogmatic conversationalist, among the first I recognized'.[83] Pyrrho is reputed to have referred to Democritus most of all (DL 9. 67 = LS 1C). His association with the Cynically inclined atomist Anaxarchus makes it quite probable that Democritus' conventionalist interpretation of perceptual properties influenced Pyrro's epistemology.[84] Yet, neither Pyrrho nor Timon can have had the least sympathy for atoms and void as the world's fundamental entities. Protagoras too is singled out, presumably by Xenophanes, for his honesty in declaring that he knew nothing about the gods.[85] But he is also called a 'sophist', a pejorative term in the *Silloi*, and Timon (fr. 47) describes him as 'joining the fray, well-skilled in contention'.

Apart from Pyrrho and Xenophanes (and also two of Pyrrho's followers, frs. 49–50), all the deceased philosophers in the *Silloi* were doubtless engaged, like their prototype Iliadic warriors, in the war—the philosophical war of words; and this is the strongest indication of how they fall short of Pyrrho's uncompetitive tranquillity. Among the philosophers whom Sextus Empiricus reviews and rejects as having authentically common ground with the sceptics are Heraclitus, Democritus, Protagoras, Plato and the Academics, and even Xenophanes himself.[86] The later Pyrrhonists will have had Timon's authority for considering all of these as potential candidates in support of Pyrrho and for regarding none of them as coming fully up to scratch.

<div align="center">V</div>

Before assessing the general significance of the *Silloi* as pro-Pyrrhonist propaganda, we need to consider the work's treatment of philosophers other than those already dealt with. In light of its fragmentary state, it is remarkable that only one Greek philosopher of note, apart from (the relatively minor) Stilpo and the Cynics, is unmentioned in the existing material—Theophrastus. That may of course be due to pure chance, but 'Aristotle's painful aimlessness' is the sole reference to the Peripatetics in any of Timon's extant lines.[87] If the

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done so, but I think Mansfeld leans too heavily on the negative side of Timon's assessment of Xenophanes.

[83] Fr. 46 = DL 9.40: οἷον Δημόκριτόν τε περίφρονα ποιμένα μύθων,| ἀμφίνοον λεσχῆνα μετὰ πρώτοισιν ἀνέγνων.

[84] See Brochard 1923, 47–9, von Fritz 1964, 94–5, and Dal Pra 1975, vol. 1, pp. 47–53.

[85] Fr. 5 = Sextus, *M* 9.56. For Timon's treatment of Protagoras, see Decleva Caizzi 1990.

[86] *PH* 1.210–35.   [87] Fr. 36 = DL 5.11: εἰκαιοσύνη ἀλεγεινή.

Peripatetics were as prominent and influential in the early third century as we have tended to assume, it is very surprising that their names do not appear in the passages of Timon cited by our main sources—Athenaeus, Diogenes Laertius, and Sextus Empiricus—especially because Timon was not loath to mock his elder contemporary Academics and Stoics. Just how surprising the omission is becomes patent when we survey the names that are attested: Pre-Socratics—Thales (fr. 23), Pythagoras (fr. 57), Xenophanes (frs. 59–60), Heraclitus (fr. 43), Parmenides (fr. 44), Empedocles (fr. 42), Zeno of Elea (fr. 45), Melissus (fr. 45), Anaxagoras (fr. 24), and Democritus (fr. 46); Socratics—Socrates himself (frs. 25, 62), Plato (frs. 19, 30, 54, 62), Xenophon (fr. 26), Phaedo (fr. 28), Eucleides (fr. 28), Antisthenes (fr. 37), Aristippus (fr. 27); other fifth- and fourth-century philosophers—Protagoras (frs. 5, 47), Prodicus (fr. 18), Anaxarchus (fr. 58), Diodorus Cronus (frs. 32–2), Speusippus (fr. 56), Aristotle (fr. 36); Academics—in general (frs. 30, 35) and Arcesilaus (frs. 31–2, 34, 55); Stoics—in general (frs. 13–14, 39, 65–6?), Zeno of Citium (frs. 38–9), Cleanthes (fr. 41), Persaeus (fr. 6), Aristo (frs. 6, 40), Dionysius of Heraclea (fr. 17), who reverted to Epicureanism; Epicurus himself (frs. 7, 51); Menedemus (frs. 29,31) and his pupil Ctesibius (fr. 16); followers of Pyrrho—Philo (fr. 50) and Eurylochus (fr. 49).

The greatest space, apart from that given to Pyrrho, is occupied by Socrates, Plato, and the Academy, especially Arcesilaus, on the one hand, and by Zeno and the Stoics on the other. Clearly Timon wanted to reflect the greatest philosophical controversy of the age, the debate between the Stoics and the Academic sceptics on the criterion of truth. And he wanted to do so, I conjecture, not primarily because of its contemporaneity, but more especially in order to vindicate Pyrrho's status against two obvious challenges—to the originality and cogency of his negative epistemology (from the Academics) and to the effectiveness of his ethics (from the Stoics). The Academics did not promise that tranquillity ensued from complete suspension of judgement, the stance by which they wished to be characterized. The Stoics professed that their sage was supremely free from disturbing passions, and derived that mental state from his knowledge. Pyrrho's unique position, we may infer from Timon, will have consisted in his forging and fulfilling the non-Academic and non-Stoic connection between suspension of judgement and equanimity.

I wish I could claim that the fragments representing Arcesilaus and the Stoic Zeno confirm these conjectures and inferences. Unfortunately, they are among the most difficult of the *Silloi*, and there is still no scholarly consensus about some of their general purport and textual readings. I shall more or less

repeat the interpretation of them that I offered in the original article, indicating subsequent contributions in the notes. My approach rests heavily on Diels (1901, 193), though I diverge from him over some details.

Diels rejected earlier suggestions that all three books of the *Silloi* situated their scene in a parody of the Homeric underworld. He restricted this motif to the second and third books, and proposed that in the first book Timon introduced a fishing scene, such as Lucian much later employed in his *Piscator*.[88] (Actually the existence of a fishing scene seems quite compatible with an underworld setting throughout.) What strongly supports Diels' 'fishing' proposal is the fact that fish and swimming are explicitly mentioned in our material. According to the preferable reading in fr. 30 (= DL 3.7), Timon describes Plato, with a splendid pun, as 'an eloquent and very large mullet' (*platistakos*), who is leading 'everyone', which in context means followers of the Academy.[89] One of the accompanying Academic fish was almost certainly Arcesilaus, whom Timon describes as saying: 'I shall swim to Pyrrho and crooked Diodorus.'[90] Since Arcesilaus claimed with his scepticism to be continuing the authentic tradition of the Academy, it is appropriate for him to be part of Plato's shoal. Yet, Timon was quite aware of the complexity of fixing Arcesilaus' identity, as reflected in the Stoic Aristo's brilliant parody of the Homeric chimaera, to describe the Academic: 'Plato in front, Pyrrho behind, Diodorus in the middle.'[91]

In fact, the following fragment of Timon on Arcesilaus was very likely either inspired by Aristo's quip or was itself the model for Aristo.[92] Because of the textual problems, I quote the Greek, with an abbreviated critical apparatus:[93]

<div style="text-align:center">

τῇ γὰρ ἔχων Μενεδήμου ὑπὸ στέρνοισι μόλυβδον
θεύσεται ἢ <ʹς> Πύρρωνα τὸ πᾶν κρέας ἢ Διόδωρον

</div>

Μενεδήμου Diog. P, Numen: -ον Diog. BF   θεύσεται Numen: θήσεται Diog.

Lloyd-Jones   <ʼσ> Meineke   κρέας codd.:κέρας Lloyd-Jones

[88] Billerbeck 1987 rejects the fishing scene, but her alternative interpretations are hardly persuasive; see di Marco 1989 *ad loc.* and Ax 1991, 182–3.

[89] The variant readings are much tamer: πλατίστατος and πλατύστατος. According to Athenaeus 3.118c, the largest mullets were called πλατίστακος.

[90] Fr. 32 = DL 4.33: νήξομαι εἰς Πύρρωνα καὶ σκολιὸν Διόδωρον.

[91] *SVF* 1.343 = DL 4.33; the source of the parody is *Iliad* 6.181.

[92] Brunschwig 1999, 250 n. 72, plausibly opts for Timon's influence on Aristo.

[93] Fr. 31 = DL 4.33 and Numenius ap. Euseb., *PE* 14.5.12. For other interpretations of these lines, see di Marco 1989 and Lloyd-Jones and Parsons 1981, fr. 803.

Now, a translation of the text I accept:

Having the lead weight of Menedemus deep within his chest, he will swim either to Pyrrho, who is full flesh, or to Diodorus.

The word I translate 'lead weight' (*molybdon*) recalls a Homeric line about fishing, and Timon's first line is also modelled on a line from the *Odyssey* in the context of the hero's swimming.[94] Both epic texts lend support to Diels' proposal that Timon introduced a fishing scene. Numenius, one of the sources of the passage, explains the reference to Menedemus thus: 'Timon says that Arcesilaus received dialectic from Menedemus and was fitted out by him.' Unlike Diels, however, I don't think that Menedemus or Pyrrho or Diodorus are themselves represented as fish here. Rather, we should suppose that Menedemus is a fisherman whose bait has already so attracted Arcesilaus that he has swallowed it, hook, line, and sinker. Pyrrho and Diodorus (or their baits) represent alternative sources of nourishment for the fish Arcesilaus. As 'all flesh', Pyrrho offers unrivalled sustenance, but Diodorus, for Timon's satire, should offer quite different fare.

A line of the *Silloi* runs: 'What do you want? Slight flesh, lots of bones.'[95] We do not know the identity of the questioner or the respondent, but the lean answer looks as if it would make a fine contrast to the 'all flesh' Pyrrho, and therefore apt characterization of the logic-chopping Diodorus.[96]

Turning to Timon's representation of Zeno, we find the founder of the Stoa, in contrast with the big fish Plato, 'surrounded by a cloud of the city's most beggarly and light-minded citizens'—drawing again on Timon's stock image of the inflatedness and insubstantiality of rival philosophers, and reflecting Zeno's teaching location in the Athenian portico.[97] The other portrayal of Zeno in the *Silloi* has so far resisted secure interpretation. It refers to him as 'a greedy old Phoenician woman' (mocking his Cypriot origins), eager to fill a bag or net, but totally lacking intelligence in spite of

[94] At *Iliad* 24. 80–2 μολυβδαίνη is the lead weight mounted on an ox horn (κέρας)—hence Lloyd-Jones' conjecture—which brings death to fish. Timon's first line is modelled on *Odyssey* 5.346–7, τῆι δέ, τόδε χρήδεμνον ὑπὸ στέρνοιο (or στέρνοισι) τάνυσσαι.

[95] Fr. 52 = Galen, *In Hipp. Epidem.* VI comm. II 42. p. 112 Wenkebach (*Corp. Med. Gr.* V.10.22): τί θέλεις; ὀλίγον κρέας, ὀστέα πολλά.

[96] The suitability of the 'bone' image's attraction to Diodorus gains support from Galen's context, where he complains about the philological fussiness of certain Hippocratic scholars, and from its similarity to a quip against dialecticians made by Aristo (*SVF* 1.392), as skilfully discovered by Moretti 1995.

[97] For the traditional emphasis on Zeno's cult of poverty, see Decleva Caizzi 1993, 311–14.

his obsession with logical refinements. [98] In my original article I accepted from Diels (1901) that Zeno was part of the hypothesized fishing scene, but while that still seems to me to be possible, I prefer not to press the point here. What seems generally clear from both passages on Zeno is Timon's viewing him like Arcesilaus, though in different ways, as excessively ambitious to recruit followers. Notwithstanding the underworld motif, Timon's principal Homeric originals for his *Silloi* are the first books of the *Iliad*, turning that heroic contest into a futile battle of competing philosophers, and thereby highlighting Pyrrho's serene detachment.

VI

How, to conclude, should we assess Timon's intellectual and artistic achievement in the *Silloi*? And what can we infer about the work's influence?

With its Homeric parody and allusion, the *Silloi* formed a learned and witty poem in the fashionable Hellenistic style. [99] Timon's vignettes of philosophers must have appealed to an audience sophisticated enough to appreciate not only such salient features as Empedocles' four elements, Anaxagoras' *nous*, Socrates' irony (features that still form our thumbnail sketches of these thinkers), but also more esoteric details, such as the dig at Plato for allegedly buying the *Timaeus* at great cost from Pythagoreans.[100] Timon is highly informed about both genuine philosophical substance and scurrilous gossip. How much of the former he derived from first-hand reading is quite unclear, but he must have drawn on earlier accounts of philosophers' lives and summaries of their doctrine. When we find Aristoxenus reporting that Plato wanted to make a bonfire out of the writings of Democritus, and Timon saying that the Athenians wanted to burn the works of Protagoras, the thought and expression seem too close to be coincidental.[101] Whatever were his sources, Timon knew the

[98] Fr. 38 = DL 7.15. For the first half of the text, see n. 50 above. Rather than take up the space necessary to discuss the problems presented by the second half, I refer to di Marco 1989 *ad loc.*, Billerbeck 1987, and Gannon 1987, all of whom resist taking Zeno to be a fisherwoman.

[99] Timon (DL 9.110–13) is credited with writing epics and dramas, and with assisting two tragedians. Note also (ibid.) the report that he complained to Aratus about the current fashion for correcting the old texts of Homer; see Pfeiffer 1968, 121–2.

[100] Frs. 42 = DL 8.67, 24 = DL 2.6, 25 = DL 2.19 (n. 69 above); and for the dig at Plato, fr. 54 = Aulus Gellius 3.17.4, probably influenced by Aristoxenus, who claimed (DL 3.67) that Plato largely derived the *Republic* from Protagoras.

[101] DL 9.40 = Democritus DK 68 A1; Timon fr. 5 = Sextus, *M* 9.56. I owe the comparison with Aristoxenus to Arnaldo Momigliano.

broad outlines of philosophical history well enough to be quoted without apology alongside much graver authorities.

About half of the fragments of the *Silloi* come from Diogenes Laertius, and in most cases he found them in preceding biographers. Antigonus of Carystus was almost certainly responsible for the quotations of Timon that Diogenes uses in his Life of Pyrrho, and likewise for those in his Life of Arcesilaus. As Momigliano (1971, 14–15), elegantly observes: 'Hellenistic biography was far more elaborately erudite than any previous biographical composition. It was also far more curious about details, witticisms, anecdotes and eccentricities.' With his brilliant gift of economical caricature, Timon could satisfy the biographers on all these counts—doxographical, satirical, and novelistic. Fantasy apart, he does not appear to have fabricated any of the doctrinal content he ascribes. His *Silloi* are a doxographical pastiche, but this made them no less welcome to Diogenes Laertius and his predecessors. There was probably an intrinsic connection between Sotion's commentary on the work (see n. 6 above) and his influential *Successions of philosophers*.

You did not need to be a philosopher to relish Timon's skill as a comic cartoonist, but the satire of the *Silloi* has a clear philosophical purpose—to establish Pyrrho's pre-eminent wisdom within the standard lines of history from Thales onward. Timon's debunking scope is comprehensive. His wit and deflationary assessments are neither ends in themselves nor mere embellishments, but intrinsic elements of that endeavour. From now on, Pyrrho was not be left as an isolated sage of Elis. Timon drew on the entire philosophical and epic tradition, in order to place his hero in the proper sceptical perspective. Homeric parody provided a mock-heroic context for exposing the grandiose pretensions of Greece's intellectual elite. In that process, just a few—Xenophanes and, I conjecture, Cynics—were catalogued as honourable, though partly misguided, predecessors. So it would appear that Pyrrho, though uniquely qualified as the guide to happiness, was distinguishable in degree rather than in kind from some who had gone before him. He could, up to a point, be allied with ethical postures of Cynics, whose mock-serious discourse so strongly appealed to Timon. By contrast, the new Stoic and Epicurean dogmatists, especially the Stoics, had to be exposed as futile blunderers, with Arcesilaus, the leading opponent of the latter, shown to be no more capable of rivalling Pyrrho than anyone else.

That these were Timon's aims in the *Silloi* is confirmed not only by the fragments themselves but also by the later Pyrrhonean tradition. Sextus Empiricus, in his lengthy doxographies, was developing a pattern first set by Timon.

His chief purpose throughout is to establish that there are no compelling grounds for assenting to any philosophical thesis. One of his favourite techniques is to advert, like Timon, to the disagreements between his dogmatist opponents. Sextus is often satirical at their expense, and, though not focusing on the personality of Pyrrho, he is as determined as Timon to establish scepticism as the only rational option and secure basis for tranquillity. Neither the *Silloi* nor Timon's other works are likely to have exhibited much that anticipates the formal methods of argument the later Pyrrhonists developed; but even here we find hints in Timon's prose writings of such dialectical strategies.[102] Thus we can conclude that without Timon and his portrayal of Pyrrho, there would have been no Sextus Empiricus.

POSTSCRIPT

Although this chapter largely reproduces my earlier study of Timon, I have revised the main text and notes, in part for stylistic reasons and economy, but more especially to take some account of the substantial body of work that has appeared since the original piece was published in 1978.

That work includes, first and foremost, the editions of the *Silloi* by di Marco (1989), of the other verse fragments of Timon by Lloyd-Jones and Parsons (1981), and of the testimonia for Pyrrho by Decleva Caizzi (1981). I also single out for mention here the following important articles: Burnyeat (1980), Ferrari (1981), Brunschwig (1990), Ax (1991), and di Marco (1993). The principal changes I have made to the original article concern the assessment of Timon's attitude to the Eleatics and the interpretation of the fragments on Arcesilaus and Zeno of Citium.

In the period since 1978, Pyrrho's position as characterized by Timon in the Aristocles text (see n. 4 above) has been extensively discussed, and likewise the interpretation of Timon's fragment that speaks of the nature of the divine and the good (see n. 13 above). I offered my own account of these difficult passages in Long and Sedley (1987); and while I have learned a great deal from those who have discussed them since, including especially Ausland (1989), my study, focusing as it does on Timon's *Silloi*, is not the place to reconsider that account, except to make one point.

Brunschwig (1994, and more briefly 1999, 247–9) has argued that it was Timon who gave Pyrrho's philosophy, which was originally and exclusively

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[102] See n. 5 above.

ethical, the epistemological turn that paved the way to Pyrrhonian scepticism. Resting his case largely on a subtle analysis of the Aristocles text (n. 4 above), he proposes that it is to Timon himself, and not to Pyrrho, that we should impute the inference that neither perceptions nor beliefs are true or false, and hence not to be trusted. I find Brunschwig's analysis, for all its subtlety, a convoluted reading of the text (see Bett 1996, 89–96); but apart from that, doubts over whether Pyrrho adopted an epistemological stance (as traditionally supposed) need to confront Timon's actual words in the *Silloi* and other fragments. There, as we have seen, Pyrrho is praised precisely for his freedom from the pathology of *doxa* (frs. 9, 48); and his unopinionated outlook, far from being confined to ethical judgements, is quite general in its scope. Correspondingly, the Eleatics (frs. 44–5) are praised for their resistance to all empirically based opinions, while other philosophers are censured for their *doxai* (see n. 30 above).

Notice too that Diogenes Laertius (9.61), without reference to Timon, appears to make Pyrrho's reported claim that 'each thing is no more this than that' cover what we would call facts as well as values. Moreover, if Pyrrho's interests had been confined to ethics, as distinct from epistemology, there would have been no reason for Timon and Aristo to link his name to Arcesilaus.

I do not doubt that there was more (or less) to Pyrrho than we can discern from Timon. I continue, though, to think that Timon is not only our best guide but also a guide who largely forecloses any reliably independent access to his hero. The *Silloi* help to confirm and fill out what I take to be the import of Pyrrho's philosophy according to Timon in the Aristocles text: identifying happiness with a Cynic-like indifference to conventional values, and grounding that indifference on an epistemological thesis about our lack of cognitive access to the objective nature of anything.

5

Arcesilaus in his time and place

No philosopher in the early Hellenistic period is more intriguing than Arcesilaus of Pitane, and few are of comparable historical significance. His interpretation of the Platonic tradition became the stance of the Academy down to the time of Philo of Larissa and Antiochus of Ascalon. Thereafter, with the demise of the Academy as a functioning school at Athens, the dialectical strategies of Arcesilaus and Carneades lived on in the refurbished Pyrrhonism of Aenesidemus, whose advocacy of suspension of judgement (*epochē*) owed more implicitly to the Academy than it did to Pyrrho as such. Arcesilaus in effect was the founder of Greek scepticism as a methodology for demonstrating that every claim to knowledge or theoretical belief could be met with a counter-argument of equal strength. By his rejoinders to Stoic theses, continued and developed by Carneades, Arcesilaus ensured that Stoic philosophers must be constantly on the alert against sceptical challenges. More than any other thinker of his lifetime, Arcesilaus deserves the credit for ensuring that Hellenistic philosophy remain true to the classical tradition of rigorous argument, with no quarter given to sloppy thinking or idle dogmatism.

From Cicero, Sextus Empiricus, and Plutarch we gain tantalizingly brief glimpses of Arcesilaus' dialectical virtuosity.[1] Yet, the process by which his

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* 2.66–7 (LS 69G), 77–8 (LS 40D); SE, *M* 7.151–7 (LS 41C). Context and chronology make it virtually certain that Plutarch's argument at *Adv. Col.* 1122A–F (LS 69A) is also attributable to Arcesilaus: see Westman 1955, 294–5.

arguments reached these later times is quite obscure. Were they recorded in the Academy's records? Did they filter down to Clitomachus, who wrote out his teacher Carneades' arguments, in an oral form? Traces of Arcesilaus' actual words, we may presume, were transmitted in writing through the Academy's Stoic opponents, especially Chrysippus (DL 7.183), who was his student for a time. What we learn about his arguments is probably reliable in substance. But if, as seems certain, Arcesilaus published no philosophical works under his own name,[2] we have to reckon with the probability that even our meagre record of him in Cicero, Sextus, and Plutarch is nothing like a first-hand report of what he said.

This situation casts Diogenes Laertius' Life of Arcesilaus into a prominence that has not been adequately appreciated. If, as I shall argue, his Life captures features of Arcesilaus that draw directly on contemporary witnesses, we can ask whether, notwithstanding the limitations of Diogenes' philosophical comments, these features corroborate or throw light on our more sophisticated but much later reporters. Apart from this, Diogenes' Life of Arcesilaus is one of the best examples we might take if we are interested in a case-study of his collection at the highest level it achieves as biography rather than doctrinal summary. That level, to be sure, is a hill of very moderate altitude, but with Arcesilaus it does at least avoid the flatness, not to say banality, that marks so much of his work.

Of his eighty-two Lives, fourteen are longer than that of Arcesilaus, which occupies eight-and-a-half pages in the Oxford Classical Text edition. However, such statistics fail to indicate the unusual amplitude of this particular Life in Diogenes' collection, taken as a whole. The longest Lives—those of Aristippus, Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes of Sinope, Zeno of Citium, Pythagoras, Pyrrho, and Epicurus (all founders of schools or movements)—are largely taken up with summaries of doctrine, lists of works, and sayings or anecdotes that supposedly illustrate the individual's philosophical stance. What Diogenes reports about the lives of these philosophers in factual detail, or even in ethical terms, occupies only a small fraction of the total. With the Life of Arcesilaus the reader gets a rather different impression. Here too there are the

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[2] Plutarch, *Alex. fort.* 328A. This is not to say that Arcesilaus published nothing at all. He was a distinguished poet (DL 4.30–1, see Gigante 1970), and he may have edited and published lecture notes (*hypomnēmata*) left by his close Academic friend and lover Crantor (DL 4.24; Philodemus, *Hist. Acad.* col. 18). However, the name of Crantor is missing from the parallel text of DL 4.32. The upshot of both sources, taken together, is that Arcesilaus was believed to have edited someone's work, conceivably literary work of his own (see DL 4.31), which he either 'published or burned'.

characteristic anecdotes and sayings, but they contribute to a portrait of the philosopher that has sufficient colour and verisimilitude to make something like a biography in a modern sense.

The two figures in Diogenes' complete work that are treated most comparably are probably Socrates and Menedemus of Eretria. The life and character of Socrates were bound to merit special treatment, but why did Diogenes pay so much attention to Arcesilaus and Menedemus? The simplest answer to this question takes us back some 400 or 500 years before Diogenes to Antigonus of Carystus.[3] This third-century BC biographer probably knew Arcesilaus personally; and, even if he was too young to have met Menedemus, he must have known people who were well acquainted with both philosophers. I shall assume that Diogenes gleaned most of his biographical and anecdotal material for these Lives from Antigonus (or from writers strongly dependent on him), and that it is Antigonus' authorial style that accounts for the close similarity in tone, language, and approach between the Life of Menedemus and the Life of Arcesilaus.[4] Let me illustrate what I mean.

Both Arcesilaus and Menedemus encounter a follower of the Dialectician Alexinus (2.125; 4.36). Each of them is described as being a hard hitter (*epikoptēs*) and a frank speaker (*parrēsiastēs*, 2.127; 4.33). Neither of these words occurs elsewhere in Diogenes' narrative, though he cites Timon's description of Xenophanes as *epikoptēs* (9.18), which I conjecture was Antigonus' source for this rare word. Both Arcesilaus and Menedemus have dealings with Hierocles, the commandant of the Piraeus, in contexts to do with King Antigonus Gonatas (2.117; 4.39). Menedemus is said to have been 'keen on popularity' (*philodoxos*, 2.131), and the same epithet is reported as a criticism directed at Arcesilaus (4.41). This word is found only in their Lives. Another epithet that these two figures and no others share is 'generous' (*eleutherios*, 2.132; 4.38). Diogenes singles out their dialectical inventiveness (*heuresiologia*) and their 'competitive' (or 'eristic') tendencies (2.134; 4.37). He contrasts their formidable verbal dexterity with their personal mildness (2.136; 4.37), and he comments on their liking to dine well (2.29; 4.40).

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[3] See Wilamowitz 1881, Dihle 1956, and Dorandi 1999. Diogenes does not name Antigonus in his Life of Arcesilaus, but cf. DL 4.17, 22, and for Menedemus, DL 2.136.

[4] My assumption is supported by the findings of the scholars cited in n. 3 above. Antigonus was probably Diogenes' main source for the biographical details in his Lives of Pyrrho, Timon, Lyco, Polemo, Crates, and Crantor, but as biographies or vignettes in a modern sense, none of these Lives is as full or complex as those of Menedemus and Arcesilaus.

These parallels could be extended. No other pair of philosophers in Diogenes' collection is described in such similar ways or in just these ways. If he himself were responsible for them, we should expect indications elsewhere. Yet, in spite of these similarities, Arcesilaus and Menedemus are not represented as if one of them were simply a clone of the other. Arcesilaus appears as bisexual and completely averse to politics, Menedemus as heterosexual and politically active.

Assuming, then, that it is Antigonus to whom we owe the gist of Diogenes' characterizations of both philosophers, we should now ask why he (rather than Diogenes) paid so much attention to Menedemus and Arcesilaus. To say that Antigonus found both of them interesting must be true, but can we say what it was that especially sparked his interest? According to a spoof by the Pyrrhonist Timon (DL 4.33), Arcesilaus had 'internalized' Menedemus.[5] Diogenes cites Timon to amplify his statement that 'Arcesilaus held fast to dialectic and held on to the Eretrians' arguments', clearly alluding to Menedemus. Contemporaries of Arcesilaus, probably correctly, saw a close affinity between his argumentative skills and methods and those of his older contemporary Menedemus. Neither man was a publishing or a doctrinal philosopher.[6] What a biographer could do for them, as Antigonus evidently did, was focus on the interest of their personalities and characters, and, above all, on their skill as talkers and debaters. For us, at any rate, the biographer's chatty style should not be dismissed as merely a beguiling way of adorning a tale or evading a more serious intellectual endeavour.[7] It is notoriously difficult for people who are not philosophers to capture the significance of philosophical talk. Antigonus, on the evidence of Diogenes, succeeds in showing that both Arcesilaus and Menedemus were philosophers with recognizable analytical skills.

To dispel any doubts about the propriety of shoving Diogenes himself into the background, we should next observe that sentences in his Lives of the Academics often tally more or less verbatim with legible passages from the *History*

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[5] See Chapter 4 of this volume, p. 91.

[6] According to Antigonus (DL 2.136), Menedemus wrote nothing and had no fixed doctrines. He (or the Eretrian school) is reported to have had logical interests that closely coincide with those attributed to his teacher Stilpo, including issues to do with predication and conditional propositions; see Giannantoni 1990, vol. 1, pp. 516–17, DL 2.135, and Chapter 4 of this volume, p. 77.

[7] Dihle 1956, 107–16, comments well on Antigonus' interest in the ethical character of his biographical subjects, and traces this focus to the Hellenistic profession of philosophy to be the proper guide to life.

of the Academics, partially preserved on papyri from Herculaneum, and generally attributed to Philodemus.[8] Here are the most salient instances.

In his Life of Crates, Diogenes (4.22) says that Arcesilaus, on transferring from Theophrastus to Polemo and Crates, described them as 'gods or relics of the Golden Race'. The *Hist. Acad.* (col. 15) repeats the same statement but in a more vivid and amplified form:

Arcesilaus said, that on transferring from Theophrastus, Polemo and his associates appeared to him like gods or relics of those ancient people who were fashioned from the Golden Race.

Both texts (DL 4.32 and *Hist. Acad.* col. 18) report the fact that Arcesilaus took over headship of the Academy after the death of Crates. Diogenes continues in just four Greek words: 'when a certain Socratides withdrew (from the school) in his favour.' The other text begins similarly, but then continues by observing that Socratides had been elected by the young members of the Academy as their president because of his seniority. In place of this intriguing detail, Diogenes inconsequentially refers to the tradition that the reason why Arcesilaus refrained from composing any book was his suspending judgement about everything. *Hist. Acad.*, retaining temporal continuity, passes from Arcesilaus' election to a brief account of his philosophical development:

At first he defended the position adopted by the school from Plato and Speusippus up to Polemo. Later after *this man* the Academy's style underwent deviation.[9]

Diogenes says nothing about Arcesilaus' early defence of his predecessors' position. Instead, he begins his Life (4.28) by representing Arcesilaus as introducing 'disturbance' into Plato's 'system' (*logos*).

The two texts (DL 4.28–9 and *Hist. Acad.* col. 17) give almost verbatim accounts of Arcesilaus' four half-brothers. Diogenes interrupts this family history with some lines describing Arcesilaus' earliest teachers. Only after he has reached Crantor does he return to the family, noting that Moireas, Arcesilaus' elder half-brother on his father's side, 'was directing him towards rhetoric', and then adding: 'but he loved philosophy and Crantor was in love with him.' *Hist. Acad.* reports Moireas' tutelage of Arcesilaus without digressing to any of his teachers, including the erotic Crantor, and then continues:

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[8] For the text of *Hist. Acad.*, see Dorandi 1991.
[9] Is the referent of 'this man' Polemo or Arcesilaus? Presumably Polemo, but I find the sentence difficult.

Arcesilaus was handsome and elegant in his behaviour, so it is said, and after getting a complete education, from the age of twenty [literally, 'on ceasing to be an ephebe'], he pursued philosophy (though Moireas resisted this because of the superiority of a rhetorical training) with the help of his elder half-brother on his mother's side.

Thanks to *Hist. Acad.*, then, we are in the rare position of being able to check Diogenes' Life of Arcesilaus against a parallel text that repeats and sometimes expands or reorganizes the same basic material. It is just conceivable that Diogenes, writing some 250 years after *Hist. Acad.*, drew on that work directly, but I find this quite unlikely. The technical works of Philodemus, preserved on Herculaneum papyri, do not seem to have been in general circulation or part of the book trade, whereas Antigonus of Carystus was still being read as late as the second century AD.[10] The common ground between *Hist. Acad.* and Diogenes is almost certainly due to their independent reliance on the work of Antigonus. He may have given details Diogenes omits or rearranges, but it is likely, in any case, that Diogenes overall gives us a more faithful impression of Antigonus' original Life of Arcesilaus than *Hist. Acad.* does, even when the latter text is legible and fuller. I would credit the emphasis on sex in the Life of Arcesilaus (DL 4. 29, 40–1) to Antigonus;[11] likewise the anecdotal material, much of which the more austere Philodeman text sems to have passed over.

What this comparison establishes is the tendency of Diogenes to follow a source extremely closely. He was a scissors-and-paste excerptor rather than a composer. What will largely concern me, in what follows, is the question of how we, as historians of philosophy, should read and use the Life of Arcesilaus as evidence for its fascinating subject. I now turn to consider how his account illuminates the philosopher's career and methods. The points that will chiefly concern us are first, Arcesilaus' formative years and relation to Stoics, and second, his dialectical methods and Socratic persona.

ARCESILAUS' FORMATIVE YEARS AND RELATION TO STOICS

From the perspective of late antiquity, when Platonism had been turned into a systematic body of doctrine, Arcesilaus' scepticism clamoured for

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[10] Athenaeus 10. 419E explicitly draws on Antigonus' Life of Menedemus.
[11] For Arcesilaus, see DL 4.29, 39–40, and for Menedemus, 2.138, 140–4; cf. Dihle 1956, 112–13.

explanation, defence, or condemnation. To the Platonist Numenius, Arcesilaus was an Academic only nominally; in reality, he was a Pyrrhonist and sophist, delighting in exhibitionist and polemical argument (Eusebius, *PE* 14.6.4–6). Numenius knew the tradition that Arcesilaus engaged in controversy with Zeno. He claims that it was the fame at Athens of Zeno's 'kataleptic impression' which first motivated Arcesilaus' attack on the Stoics (*PE* 14.6.12–13). In so saying, Numenius appears to have given his own spin to the accounts of Arcesilaus' encounters with Zeno that Cicero reports (see below).

Augustine, in the *Contra Academicos*, also makes much of Arcesilaus' opposition to Zeno; but, in contrast with Numenius, his judgement on the Academic is sympathetic and laudatory. Faced with such pernicious Stoic doctrines as materialism and the soul's mortality, Arcesilaus (says Augustine), in his great insight and humanity, deemed it prudent to conceal completely the Academy's true position and bury it like gold, for future generations to discover (3.38). Thence, according to Augustine, arose all the features of the New Academy, which the Old Academy's members had not needed.[12]

In Cicero's *Academica* the antecedents of such divergent interpretations can be seen in the Antiochean and Philonian assessments of Arcesilaus. On the Antiochean view, Arcesilaus attacked Zeno out of sheer obstructiveness, 'striving to draw a veil of darkness over the most perspicuous matters' (*conatus est clarissimis rebus tenebras obducere*, *Acad*. 2.16), and alluding to Arcesilaus' criticism of Stoic epistemology. This negative judgement contrasts with Cicero's own evaluation, which follows the Philonian line: 'It was with Zeno, so we have heard, that Arcesilaus began his entire struggle' (*cum Zenone, ut accepimus, Arcesilas sibi omne certamen instituit*, *Acad*. 1.44), and what motivated him were the considerations that had led Socrates and many older thinkers to confess ignorance.

Cicero, and Augustine who worked from Cicero, have nothing to say about any Pyrrhonean leanings by Arcesilaus, nor do they give us any account of his education. Numenius, who knows the Stoic Aristo's famous Homeric parody of Arcesilaus—'Plato in front, Pyrrho behind, Diodorus in the middle' (DL 4.32)—and also some details about Zeno's and Arcesilaus' education, builds these into a tissue of fabricated connections. Advancing an impossible

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[12] There is no reason to think that Augustine drew on anything more for his account of the Academics than Cicero's *Academica*, which he would have known in its complete form, and his own imagination.

chronology, he makes the two philosophers into rival and contemporaneous pupils of the older Academic Polemo.[13] He represents Arcesilaus as a handsome youth whom Theophrastus lost as a lover to Crantor. It was only loyalty to Crantor, he says, that made Arcesilaus stick to calling himself an Academic and not a Pyrrhonist (Eusebius, *PE* 14.6.4–6).

Numenius has created a travesty by selecting some of the biographical details also present in Diogenes and embellishing them. Like Cicero and Augustine, he starts from what he takes to be Arcesilaus' mature position, and looks for an explanation of it by reference to his relationship to other philosophers. Diogenes' account (DL 4.29), supplemented by *Hist. Acad.*, provides the data for reconstructing a less exciting but more credible story of Arcesilaus' intellectual development.

Item 1 (DL 4.29): as a youth, while still in his native city Pitane, Arcesilaus studied with the eminent astronomer Autolycus, his fellow countryman. Two of Autolycus' works survive, *On the moving sphere* and *On risings and settings*.[14] Autolycus was a defender of the Eudoxan system of concentric rotating spheres. From him, on the evidence of his writings, Arcesilaus would have received an excellent training in geometry and on how to set out a formal proof.

Item 2: Arcesilaus completed his higher education at Athens under Crantor in the Academy.

The intervening stages are harder to put together. Diogenes says (ibid.): 'Arcesilaus visited Sardis with Autolycus. Next he was a pupil of Xanthias, the Athenian musician, and after him of Theophrastus. Later he moved to the Academy, to Crantor.'

In order to assemble these details in an intelligible way, we need to take account of three further items:

Item 3: Moireas, Arcesilaus' elder paternal half-brother and guardian, wanted him to study rhetoric (ibid.)

Item 4: Arcesilaus left all his property to his elder maternal half-brother, Pylades, 'because Pylades eluded Moireas and took Arcesilaus to Athens' (DL 4.43).

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[13] Arcesilaus was probably about 40 years old in the 127th or 128th Olympiads (see DL 4.45 as supplemented by Jacoby and Diels). In which case he was born within the period 315–305 BC, and therefore far too young to have been Zeno's fellow pupil with Polemo. Zeno's birth year was approximately 334. He began teaching in the Stoa in about 300. Arcesilaus succeeded Crates in about 274, assuming that Polemo died in 276/5 (see Dorandi 1991, 193 and 241).

[14] Autolycus is the author of the earliest complete astronomical texts, which probably date from the last two decades of the 4th century; cf. Mogenet 1950. The texts are edited by Aujac 1979.

Item 5: *Hist. Acad*. col. 17, as we have seen, says that Arcesilaus began philosophy 'right after his ephebate', that is, at the age of 20, 'having completed all his (secondary) education'.

Presumably, then, Arcesilaus was in Athens by the age of 17 to 19, and studying for some of this time with the musician Xanthias. He was highly precocious, evidently, which will account for his still earlier study with Autolycus. There had been some dispute in the family concerning the higher education for this brilliant adolescent. Moireas had wanted him to study rhetoric, probably in Pitane; but Arcesilaus, with another half-brother's help, leaves the provinces for Athens, the intellectual Mecca.[15] Soon he attends Theophrastus' lectures there (DL 4.29). Does this imply that he has now chosen philosophy rather than rhetoric? Not necessarily. Diogenes associates Arcesilaus' move from Theophrastus to Crantor with Arcesilaus' rejection of the rhetorical career that Moireas had wanted for him, but in the sexually charged lines of Euripides' *Andromeda* that Crantor and Arcesilaus exchange—'O maiden, if I save you, will you be grateful to me?' and 'Take me, stranger, whether you want a maidservant or a wife'—it is probably rhetoric and not just Theophrastus from which Crantor rescues Arcesilaus.

I conclude that Arcesilaus, before joining Crantor, attended Theophrastus' lectures on rhetoric. This conclusion gains support from Theophrastus' alleged disappointment at losing a pupil so 'adept at argument' (*euepicheirētos*), and Diogenes' ensuing comment that Arcesilaus was 'most cogent' (*embrithestatos*) and 'highly literary' (*philogrammatos*, 4.30).[16] We should recall the fact that the Peripatetics were the leading exponents of rhetoric at this time. It must have been Theophrastus' lectures on rhetoric, and not those on botany, which drew such large audiences (DL 5.37), and at which he supposedly dressed fastidiously and gesticulated (Athenaeus 1. 21A–B). We may note too that Crantor is said to have poked fun at Theophrastus' 'rhetorical theses' (DL 4.27).

Of course, Arcesilaus' choice of philosophy over rhetoric is misleadingly expressed. Rhetoric, especially in the Peripatos, was a recognized part of the philosophical curriculum. In opting for Crantor and the Academy, Arcesilaus

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[15] Wilamowitz 1881, 57–8, presumes that Antigonus had intimate acquaintance with affairs in Pitane, as evidenced by Diogenes' citation (4.44) of Arcesilaus' letter concerning his will that he sent to Thaumasias, one of his relatives in Pitane.

[16] *Euepicheirētos* should probably mean 'good at dialectical argument' (cf. Aristotle, *Top.* 8, 162a17). Theophrastus wrote many books of *epicheirēmata* (DL 5.43). A rhetorical sense for *embrithēs* is supported by Philodemus, *Rhet.* 1.46.

was expressing a philosophical preference. He was also, it appears, gaining a lover and someone whose house he could share (DL 4.22).

What else was it about Crantor and the Academy that especially attracted Arcesilaus? One likely factor is the school's long-standing status as a centre for students with strong mathematical interests. Apart from his early studies with Autolycus, Arcesilaus (we don't known when or where) pursued geometry with a mathematician called Hipponicus (DL 4.32). Nothing seems to be known about this man's work, but Crantor was extremely interested in the mathematics of Plato's *Timaeus*.[17] Gifted mathematicians show their ability when they are very young, so we should reckon with the possibility that Arcesilaus started his career in the Academy as Crantor's mathematical protégé.

Another interest that Arcesilaus shared with Crantor and also with Polemo (DL 4.20, 25) was poetry. Crantor, as well as Arcesilaus, appears to have been a practising poet. Diogenes, almost certainly following Antigonus, comments on Arcesilaus' daily reading of Homer (4.31). Though an admiration for the greatest Greek poet might be dismissed as a biographical commonplace, the cultivation of Homer by all these Academics rings true.[18]

It is much harder to characterize the strictly philosophical activity of the Academy that Arcesilaus joined. Neither Polemo nor Crantor, it appears, continued the strongly metaphysical and speculative work of Speusippus and Xenocrates. From what little we know of their teaching, it focused especially on ethics. It is tempting to speculate that they interpreted their role as Platonists in more Socratic, dialectical and practical directions than their immediate Academic predecessors, but there is no scrap of evidence to suggest that they were sceptically inclined.[19] This must have been Arcesilaus' great innovation, but perhaps a stance that he only finalized and advertised after he succeeded the older Socratides, who withdrew in his favour. As time went by, Arcesilaus appeared to be someone who had introduced a revolution in the Academy, but there was probably more continuity with his older Academic

[17] See Dillon 2003, 223–4. I am not proposing that Arcesilaus, as a mature philosopher, did technical work in mathematics, but that his mathematical training and his early interests in the subject should be given due weight in accounts of his intellectual development.

[18] Note that Zeno wrote no fewer than five books of *Homeric Problems* (DL 7.4), on which see Long 1996/2001, 65.

[19] See Long 1974, 5–6 and Dillon 2003, 156–9. I take the virtual absence of any record of books written by Polemo, Crates, and Crantor to point in this direction. However, Sedley 2002 (followed by Dillon 2003, 166–76), in a brilliant piece of detective work on Cicero, *Acad.* 1.24–9, proposes that Polemo strongly anticipated and influenced Zeno's cosmology.

colleagues, at least initially, than appears from the record in most of our later sources. We can at least suppose that he seemed the best man to head the Academy after the long presidency of Polemo and the brief tenure of Crates.

These findings, largely based on Diogenes, also accord with the Philonian interpretation in Cicero concerning the unity of the Academy, but with one very significant difference. Cicero, like Numenius and Augustine, emphasizes Arcesilaus' opposition to Zeno's epistemology as the catalyst of his scepticism. But there is not a word in Diogenes' Life of Arcesilaus on this, nor indeed any reference to Zeno, nor even a hint that Arcesilaus' 'suspending judgement about everything' (DL 4.32) was specifically directed at Stoics. Equally, Diogenes' Life of Zeno—also derived in part from Antigonus of Carystus (DL 7.12)—says nothing whatever about Arcesilaus or Academic scepticism.

One's first reaction, on noting these points, is to conclude that Diogenes, as often elsewhere, is a bad reporter. In fact, if he failed to give any indication in any of his Lives of Arcesilaus' controversies with Stoics, we would be justified in calling him outrageously defective. All the surviving arguments attributed to Arcesilaus by Cicero, Sextus, and Plutarch are rebuttals of a Stoic thesis with the help of Stoic premises (see n. 1 above).

The absence from Diogenes' account of Arcesilaus of any reference to argument with Stoics is certainly a prima facie indictment of its value as evidence for the philosopher's practice. However, Arcesilaus *is* mentioned in Diogenes' Lives of three Stoics—Aristo, Cleanthes (7.171), and Chrysippus (7.183). The passage in the Life of Aristo (DL 7.162–3) runs as follows: 'He [Aristo] was principally attached to the Stoic doctrine that the wise man is free from opinion (*adoxastos*).'[20]

There follows an anecdote about the Stoic Persaeus refuting Aristo on this point, by getting him to misidentify one of a pair of twins. Diogenes then continues:

He [Aristo] would get involved in lengthy arguments with Arcesilaus. Once when he saw a monstrous bull with a uterus, he said: 'Oh dear, Arcesilaus has been given an argument against self-evidence (*enargeia*).' And to an Academic who said that he grasped nothing, he said: 'Don't you even see the person sitting next to you?' The man said: 'No', and Aristo retorted: 'Who has blinded you? Who has removed your eyesight?'[21]

[20] This thesis is crucial to the argument Zeno is said to have had with Arcesilaus in Cicero, *Acad.* 2.77 (LS 40D). See also Ioppolo 1980, 188 ff.
[21] See further Ioppolo 1980, 28–9.

This passage disturbs me for several reasons. First, Diogenes attaches to Aristo the controversy with Arcesilaus over the Stoic concept of infallible cognition (*katalēpsis*) that Cicero and later sources credit to Zeno.[22] Second, in Cicero it is Zeno, not Aristo, who agrees with Arcesilaus that the wise man is free from opinion (*Acad.* 2.77). Third, Diogenes makes out that Aristo was constantly having arguments with Arcesilaus. Let us also recall that it was Aristo who parodied Homer's description of the Chimaera by calling Arcesilaus 'Plato in front, Pyrrho behind, Diodorus in the middle'. The suspicion dawns that perhaps Diogenes' reticence on Arcesilaus' debates with Zeno is to be explained by the fact that, in reality, it *was* Aristo that Arcesilaus principally engaged in anti-Stoic arguments. Actually, Cicero is a bit guarded in his reports of Arcesilaus and Zeno. I have already noted his saying 'as we have heard' (*ut accepimus*) in his account of Arcesilaus' controversy with Zeno at *Acad.* 1.44; and, in reporting their argument at *Acad.* 2.77, his qualifications are quite evident—'perhaps' (*fortasse*) and 'I believe' (*credo*).

For Cicero, Aristo was a deviant Stoic of the distant past.[23] Chrysippean orthodoxy had utterly supplanted him. Yet for Eratosthenes, a contemporary of Arcesilaus and Aristo, these were the two outstanding philosophers of the time.[24] Ioppolo, in her excellent study of Aristo (1980), has helped to set the record straight by making us aware of his importance in the formative phase of Stoicism. By the time of Cicero it would be natural to regard Zeno, the school's founder, as Arcesilaus' principal face-to-face opponent rather than the now obscure and discredited Aristo.

I do not suggest that we should replace Zeno with Aristo in our historical accounts of Arcesilaus' life. In all probability they knew one another and conversed. Even if Aristo was the Stoic with whom Arcesilaus had the liveliest face-to-face debates, it was almost certainly Zeno's appropriation of Socrates and much Platonic and Platonizing thought that chiefly prompted Arcesilaus to return the Academy to the dialectical roots of its tradition.[25] Still, by the time Arcesilaus came to prominence, Zeno, some twenty or thirty years his senior, may have largely left it to younger followers to defend his epistemology against Academic challenges.[26] Possibly, too, the Stoics in general did not

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[22] See Chapter 10 of this volume. [23] See *Fin.* 2.43, 5.23; *Tusc.* 5.85.
[24] Strabo 1.15 (*SVF* 1. 338).
[25] See Long 1996/2001, 14–16 and Dillon 2003, 235–7.
[26] I have added the word 'largely' to this sentence in response to Ioppolo 1986, 82 n. 30, who took me, in the original version of this paper, to be denying altogether that Arcesilaus criticized Zeno. I did not then, and do not now, make so strong a claim. My point is not that we should read

loom quite as large in Arcesilaus' concerns as the evidence of later authors suggests. We should notice a difference in this regard between Diogenes' initial characterizations of Arcesilaus and Carneades. The first thing he reports about Carneades (4.62), after giving his patronymic and birthplace, is his careful study of books by Stoics and the fame he acquired by his effective opposition to them. Admittedly this is little more than an expansion of the famous saying by Carneades that he goes on to quote: 'If there had been no Chrysippus, there would have been no me.' The fact remains, however, that Diogenes says nothing about the Stoics in his characterization of Arcesilaus.

ARCESILAUS' DIALECTICAL METHODS AND SOCRATIC PERSONA

This omission is all the more noteworthy because Diogenes' initial characterization of Arcesilaus as the originator of the Middle Academy (4.28) cannot be derived from a source as early as Antigonus. A contemporary biographer could not have described Arcesilaus in this way. That expression only came into vogue after the distinction between Old and New Academies had already been made. For Diogenes (4.59), it was Lacydes who originated the New Academy, but I don't think Antigonus would have so described him. The differentiation of phases in the Academy's history is unlikely to be earlier than the time of Carneades, and probably coincides with the period of Philo and Antiochus. Cicero, who never mentions a Middle Academy, treats Arcesilaus himself, when drawing on Antiochus (*Acad.* 1.46), as founder of the New Academy. The expression Middle Academy must have been introduced at a time when the school's position under Arcesilaus appeared unstable, not yet firmly attached to the stance it acquired under Lacydes and Carneades. Thus, in the earliest reference to the Middle Academy (*Hist. Acad.* col. 21), Lacydes is said to have 'stabilized the Middle Academy, which had been as nomadic as the Scythian lifestyle'.

Contemporaries of Arcesilaus, as Aristo's famous verse indicates, found him a very difficult philosopher to assess. It was probably this uncertainty, combined with a rather vague belief that Arcesilaus was transitional between the early Platonists and Carneades, that accounted for the eventual contrast

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'Aristo' for 'Zeno' in Cicero's account of the opponent with whom Arcesilaus 'began' (*instituit*) his struggle, but that we should give due weight to Diogenes' focus on Aristo, in light of his presumed access to Antigonus or other near-contemporary sources.

between Middle and New Academies. Even though the contrast exists by the time of Cicero (on the evidence of *Hist. Acad.*), it seems to be of no interest to any of his Academic spokesmen. The nearest any speaker in his *Academica* comes to saying anything similar is Lucullus' brief history of the school (*Acad.* 2.16). There he says that Arcesilaus' methodology (*ratio*), though not much accepted at first, was kept going only by Lacydes, and afterwards perfected by Carneades.

Diogenes' mention of the Middle Academy is not the only indication that his opening characterization of Arcesilaus stems from fairly late sources. He also says that Arcesilaus was the first 'to suspend his assertions owing to the contrarieties of arguments' (4.28). This statement would hardly be made before a time when there were other philosophers who might be so described and who might contest Arcesilaus' priority. It is conceivable that during Arcesilaus' lifetime the term *epochē* had already become attached to Pyrrho, as Diogenes himself reports (9.61).[27] But everything of any historical value we think we know about Pyrrho's freedom from opining detaches that mental state from the practice of formal argument. Only with Aenesidemus in the first century BC did Pyrrhonism acquire, as its instrument for suspending judgement, the dialectical method Diogenes attributes to Arcesilaus. I conclude, then, that Arcesilaus' originality in this respect is unlikely to have been singled out before there were other philosophers—neo-Pyrrhonists—who juxtaposed opposing arguments of equal weight as their method for generating *epochē*.

Next Diogenes says that Arcesilaus was the first to argue both sides (*eis hekateron*) of a thesis. This claim is false in one respect, and probably misleading in another. Argument *pro* and *contra* the same thesis had a history that went back as far as Protagoras, whom Diogenes himself accredits as its earliest practitioner (9.51). Apart from this misattribution of originality to Arcesilaus, was it really his trademark to argue *pro* and *contra* the same thesis? That procedure is regularly attributed to the New Academy in general, and it was famously practised by Carneades. But argument *pro* and *contra* the same thesis, or on both sides, needs to be carefully distinguished from argument on the opposite side (*eis enantia*), whereby one opposes a thesis stated by someone else. It is this latter procedure that Cicero attributes to Arcesilaus in a context where he pointedly likens him to Socrates: 'Arcesilaus prescribed

[27] Decleva Caizzi 1981, 136, rightly notes that Diogenes' testimony need imply only that Pyrrho, from a post-Arcesilaan perspective, could be regarded as the originator of scepticism.

that those who wanted to listen to him should not ask him questions but state their own opinions. When they had done so, he argued against them, but his listeners, so far as they could, would defend their own opinions.'[28] By the time of Cicero the distinction between the two methods of argument is often obscured, and it would be rash to suppose that Arcesilaus never took both sides himself. Nonetheless, all his surviving arguments in Cicero and Sextus are rejoinders to the theses stated by his opponents, and there is every reason to believe that this was his standard practice.[29] He could claim Socratic support for a procedure that laid on the interlocutor the responsibility for saying what he believed, and for using the interlocutor's statement as the basis for producing an elenchus.[30] By incorporating one or more of his interlocutor's premises in his rejoinder, Arcesilaus could remain uncommitted to the truth of his own counter-argument, and at the same time recommend *epochē* by showing the interlocutor that he did not know what he had initially maintained.

I have been arguing that Diogenes' opening remarks about Arcesilaus' methodology do not derive from a contemporary source and are more misleading than informative. I want now to suggest that material within the main body of the Life, probably derived from Antigonus, supports the proposal that Arcesilaus' characteristic method was to respond to an interlocutor and not to state both sides himself.

In 4.34–7 Diogenes purports to illustrate the dialectical characteristics he has attributed to Arcesilaus—his excellence at stating propositions and deriving inferences from them, his making linguistic distinctions in conversation, and his hard-hitting rejoinders and frankness. In each of the examples that now follow, Arcesilaus is represented as responding to what someone has said to him: 'to a young man who was discoursing too boldly', 'to a man accused of being homosexually penetrated who expressed the opinion that he did not find one thing [i.e. penis] larger than another', 'to an ugly but always well-dressed man, who thought himself handsome'.

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[28] *Fin.* 2.2 (LS 68J). Similarly at *Acad.* 1.45 (LS 68A) Cicero characterizes Arcesilaus as 'arguing against everyone's opinions, in order that, when equally weighty reasons were found on opposite sides on the same matter, assent might more easily be withheld from either side'.

[29] Further support for this suggestion can be gleaned from Plutarch, *St. rep.* 1035F–1037C (LS 31P), where Chrysippus, in clear reference to the Academy of Arcesilaus, says that 'arguing on the opposite' side is appropriate 'for those who practise suspension of judgement about everything'.

[30] Cf. Vlastos 1983, 30. The fullest account of Arcesilaus as a latter-day Socratic is Cooper 2004*b*.

The content of Arcesilaus' responses need not detain us. Though amusing, they are of no more philosophical interest than the unattractive persons to whom he responds. If they tell us anything about his dialectical methodology, it would be his interest in debunking silly or pretentious opinions rather than in inducing and practising *epochē*. Other Lives in Diogenes, especially that of Menedemus, also display the philosopher's remarks principally as rejoinders to another speaker, or as replies to questions. Were this all that Diogenes illustrates in the professional life of Arcesilaus, we would have to say that, rather than capturing anything distinctive about the Academic's methodology, this anecdotal material hardly distinguishes Arcesilaus from other third-century dialecticians. That, presumably, was the way he struck many of his contemporaries. Fortunately, Diogenes (4.36) provides one anecdote that not only gives Arcesilaus a much more distinctive identity but also grounds that identity as firmly as do our later sources in his firm commitment to the practise of *epochē*: 'Naturally somehow in the course of discussion, he made use of the expressions "I say" (*phēm' egō*) and "So-and-so" (stating the name) "will not assent to these things". Many of his students imitated him in this, as they also did with his speaking style and his entire deportment.'

The principal clue to this puzzling passage is the word 'naturally' (*physikōs*). It matches Plutarch's use of the same word in a context where, without naming Arcesilaus, he reports the Academic's response to Stoic critics of his policy of systematic *epochē*.[31] They had replied to his criticism of their epistemology by arguing that no psychology of action would be feasible if persons withhold assent from the impressions that stimulate their impulses.[32] Arcesilaus retorted that 'those who suspend judgement about everything do not remove this movement' (i.e. the causal connection between impression and impulse), 'but make use of the impulse which leads them *naturally* towards what appears appropriate'. By ascribing to nature the role Stoics assigned to 'assent', Arcesilaus seems to have presented them with the following rejoinder: I acknowledge that human beings appear to behave in ways that are purposeful and suitable, as I do myself, but such behaviour is explicable as a function of human nature or physiology from which the agent can maintain sufficient mental detachment to suspend judgement over the truth of its propriety.

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[31] *Adv. Col.* 1122A–F (LS 69A).
[32] For the context and the philosophical issues, see Striker 1996, 99–105.

In the light of this testimony, it seems clear that Diogenes reports a notori-
ous way that Arcesilaus had of engaging in discussion without attaching any
'theoretical weight to his assertions'.[33] That obviously fits his reference to
not giving assent, but it is too vague to explain Arcesilaus' *natural* use of 'I
say' and 'So-and-so' (stating his name) 'will not assent to these things'. As
regards 'I say', *phēmi* could just as well be translated by 'yes'. We may imagine
that Arcesilaus, like everyone else, frequently said 'yes' or 'I say' in discussion,
sometimes as a mere conversational filler, like our use of 'Oh I say!' To ensure
that his words were not taken to commit him to be making any firm judge-
ments, he would humorously detach his name from his utterance by saying
something like: 'But by "*I* say" I don't mean that Arcesilaus is making a state-
ment; *he* won't assent to this.'[34]

Some such interpretation is needed in order to link the two characteristic
sayings together. If this is right, Diogenes' 'naturally' will pertain only to 'I say',
and not to 'So-and-so will not assent' as well, which is explained not by any-
thing natural but by Arcesilaus' philosophical methodology. Although obscur-
ities in the passage remain, Diogenes' testimony was so strongly attached to
Arcesilaus that it is repeated verbatim in the Byzantine *Suda* lexicon under
its article on the word *phēmi*, though without the intriguing mention of how
Arcesilaus' students mimicked him.

Unlike Cicero, Diogenes makes no overt reference to any affinity between
Arcesilaus and Socrates, but implicitly his Arcesilaus is a decidedly more
Socratic persona than Cicero's largely colourless portrait, especially if our
image of Socrates takes account of Xenophon's record as well as Plato's. A
comparison between Diogenes' Arcesilaus and Socrates reveals the following
common features: conversational virtuosity and wit, irony, attractiveness and
sexual susceptibility to young men who want to imitate them, complete
avoidance of politics, refusal to flatter important people, lack of interest in
money, helpfulness and generosity to friends, and exceptional goodness of
character. Like Socrates, Arcesilaus was even charged, though not officially,
with corrupting the youth (DL 4.40).

No more than in the case of his affinities to Menedemus—the last of
Diogenes' Socratics (DL 2.144)—does Arcesilaus emerge as a mirror-image

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[33] So Striker 1996, 101 n. 31. See also Ioppolo 1986, 138.

[34] If my interpretation is right, the recommended Academic procedure at Cicero, *Acad.*
2.104—saying yes (*etiam*) in relation to what is persuasive (*probabilitas*) but without giving
assent—may go right back to Arcesilaus.

of Socrates. Unlike the ugly and poor Socrates, Arcesilaus was apparently handsome and wealthy. The latter, according to Diogenes, 'lived openly with two hetaerae' (4.40), and appears to have been enough of a bon viveur to be compared to Aristippus. Such differences from the standard portrayal of the austere Socrates may add credibility to the respects in which Arcesilaus is described as resembling him. Whether these common traits are historically authentic, or whether they are mainly a biographer's embellishment, they give Diogenes' Arcesilaus enough of a Socratic persona to distinguish him from all the other Academics in his Lives. It is tempting to give them some credence, and to suppose that Arcesilaus deliberately modelled much of his lifestyle as well as his dialectic on Socrates.

What we most want to know, of course, is what Arcesilaus did with 'the books of Plato that he acquired' (DL 4.32), perhaps meaning that he inherited Plato's personal library as well as Plato's dialogues. On this question, Diogenes leaves us completely in the dark. Frustrating though that is, his Life of Arcesilaus is partly valuable for what it does not say but encourages us to think about. At all events, his Arcesilaus has an intellectual complexity and personal charisma that need to be pondered when we attempt to understand the popularity of philosophy in early Hellenistic Athens.

6

Scepticism About gods

Philosophical theology offered the ancient sceptic, Academic or Pyrrhonist, a target which was tailor-made to his methods of argumentative counter-attack in the interests of 'suspension of judgement' (*epochē*). His principal opponents, the Stoics, had marshalled a battery of formal proofs concerning the existence and nature of the gods; and formal proof, or the detection of weaknesses in it, was grist to the sceptic's mill.[1] Moreover, the Stoics were in fundamental disagreement with the Epicureans over theology, disagreement of a kind that the sceptic relished. Without exerting himself, he could begin a refutative routine, as Sextus Empiricus does in *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* [hereafter *PH*] 3.2–4, by first invoking disagreements on god's nature: is god corporeal or incorporeal, anthropomorphic or some other form, in spatial location or not, within the world or outside it? If such foundational questions cannot be settled, how, asks Sextus, can we even get a conception (*ennoia*) of god? People say (e.g. Epicureans) that god should be considered that which is imperishable and blessed.[2] But consider what different schools understand by divine blessedness, and basic disagreement surfaces again. Is divine blessedness displayed in the rational order pervading the entire world, as Stoics maintain? Or should one opt for the Epicurean conception of gods who are quite detached from the world and who provide no occupation for themselves or for anything else?

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[1] On Stoic theology the most detailed and well-documented study is Dragona-Monachou 1976.

[2] Sextus' φασί at *PH* 3.4, ἀλλ' ἄφθαρτόν τι, φασί, καὶ μακάριον ἐννοήσας, τὸν θεὸν εἶναι τοῦτο νόμιζε, should be interpreted quite generally. Knowingly or not, however, he is actually repeating Epicurus almost verbatim, cf. *Ep. Men.* 123, πρῶτον μὲν τὸν θεὸν ζῷον ἄφθαρτον καὶ μακάριον νομίζων, ὡς ἡ κοινὴ τοῦ θεοῦ νόησις ὑπεγράφη. R. G. Bury (Loeb edn. *ad loc.*) glosses φασί, 'i.e. the Stoics and Epicurus, cf. § 219 *infra*'. But *PH* 3.219 refers only to Epicurus. For reasons that will be given below, ἄφθαρτος is not an essential attribute of god in the early Stoic formulation of that preconception.

These Pyrrhonian manoeuvres are scarcely food for deep philosophical thought. Their simplicity, nonetheless, is beguiling and effective. Sextus is quite right to highlight the radical discrepancy between Stoic and Epicurean theologies; quite right, I mean, if what interests us is the grounding of religious belief in compelling reasons. His challenge may be generalized as follows: can either school, or any other theological system, make a reasoned case stand its ground against either the divergence of other purportedly reasonable theories, or against the rebuttals that each school's particular theological doctrines invite?

The doctrinaire theologies of the Hellenistic philosophers fuelled scepticism in this technical sense. But scepticism conceived more generally—the ordinary person's agnosticism, bewilderment, or disenchantment with traditional gods and goddesses—fuelled Stoicism and Epicureanism themselves. Theology is central to both philosophies. The very first of Epicurus' *Kuriai doxai* includes the concept of god as 'the blessed and imperishable' (τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον) which I cited from Sextus; the pride of place assigned to this 'key doctrine' is the clearest possible mark of its importance for the Epicureans. Chrysippus held that theology should be ranked as the 'final' division (the *teletai*, as he punningly called it) of 'physical theorems', which in turn are the final or crowning part of philosophy itself (Plutarch, *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* [hereafter *St. rep.*] 1035A). Both schools would be grossly misunderstood if we took their theological theses to be adventitious or some kind of sop to conventional expectations. They should be regarded, rather, as minimalist (in the Epicurean case) and maximalist (in Stoicism) answers to deeply rooted worries, intellectual, emotional, and ethical, that were part of Hellenistic consciousness.

I emphasize this point because it is misunderstood by as fine a scholar as F. W. Walbank, who writes:[3]

For many the decline in confidence in the city-gods meant a growth of scepticism, though this was frequently disguised. The philosophers, for example, were mostly agreed in not rejecting 'the gods' outright. Thus the Stoics under Zeno and Chrysippus . . . glorified wisdom . . . but Cleanthes, in a famous hymn, identified the Stoic 'principle' with Zeus, and Epicurus, while arguing that the gods were unconcerned with human affairs, is careful not to reject their existence or to discourage paying due rites to them. These attempts to fit the gods into new philosophical patterns reveal the embarrassment of the philosophers and lead to the taking up of anomalous positions.

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[3] Walbank 1981, 218–19.

Walbank appears to be saying that Stoic and Epicurean philosophers were crypto-sceptics, who adopted uncomfortable theological positions as some kind of compromise. The correct view, in my opinion, is quite the reverse. Stoic and Epicurean theologies, for all their differences, blend tradition and rational innovation, and they do so in ways that are designed to provide content to religious sensibility without recourse to the crudities and superstitions that had discredited the gods in the eyes of many. As to the philosophical sceptic, what he attacks in the doctrines of his rivals is not, or not primarily, the traditional features of the gods that the doctrinaire schools retain, but the rational innovations—the attempt to justify theological doctrines by appeal to experience, conceptual analysis, and argument. Sextus Empiricus characterizes the sceptic as one who may be in a safer position than other philosophers: he abides by local traditions in saying that gods exist and in worshipping them. His refusal to commit himself is a philosophical attitude (*Adversus mathematicos* [hereafter *M*] 9.49), albeit one that enables him to conduct his life equably and uncontroversially.[4] Related points are made by Cotta, the sceptical spokesman of Cicero's *De natura deorum* [hereafter *ND*] 3.5–6, and on behalf of the Academic Carneades (*ND* 3.44). Even the official sceptics, then, make no profession of seeking to undermine religious beliefs outside a specific dialectical context. Their object is not to induce atheism, but to show that, for every argument concluding to the existence of gods, an argument of equal strength can be advanced on the opposite side (Sextus, *M* 9.137). The sceptic intends to leave himself and his audience in a position whereby they neither affirm nor deny the existence of gods.

Stoic theology, since it is so much richer and more ambitiously defended than Epicurean, will principally occupy me here, as it does Sextus. Every one of his eighteen arguments in *M* 9.138–81, concluding that gods do not exist, employs at least one premise that Stoics are presumed to accept. Thus he appropriates the standard Academic strategy of showing that the Stoics can be refuted by means of their own doctrines.[5] This is not to say that Sextus and

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[4] This, of course, is a posture adopted by the Pyrrhonian sceptic quite generally: cf. *PH* 1.23–4.

[5] Notice that Sextus begins his anti-theological section by explicitly elaborating the Stoic argument which concludes that the world is an animal, *M* 9.138. His set of 18 arguments can be indexed as follows: 1–4 (*M* 9.138–47) infer perishability from god's (= animal's) sentience; 5 (*M* 9.148) starts from the premise, 'If anything divine exists, it is either limited or unlimited', and 6 (*M* 9.151) and 18 (*M* 9.180) from the premise, 'If ..., it is either a body or incorporeal'; 7–15 (*M* 9.152–76) all take their material from the Stoic conception of virtue or specific virtues, and often exploit the Stoics' own exclusion of any state intermediate between virtue and vice; 16–17

his sources intend their sceptical arguments to address Stoicism exclusively. As presented, these arguments are quite general in their scope and will take in any philosophers or persons who hold, as the Stoics did, that gods are animate beings, and so on. The point is rather that the Stoics are the primary target of these arguments. This is proved by material in the arguments which derives from specific Stoic doctrines.⁶ It seems equally clear that the Epicureans are not a primary target of these arguments. In his survey of philosophers' views on theology, Sextus briefly refers to Epicurus as someone reputed to include god only in addressing the 'many' (9.58; cf. Cicero, *ND* 1.123), but who dispenses with god so far as the nature of things is concerned. Subsequently, in dismissing the proposition that god has organs of speech he mentions Epicurus' 'mythologizing' (*M* 9.178); and that is all we hear about Epicurus in Sextus' most extended treatment of theology. For his refutations of the Stoics Sextus draws, perhaps entirely, on the earlier Academic tradition.⁷ This is clear from a comparison with Cicero's material in *ND* 3.29–34. And, notwithstanding Cotta's criticisms of the Epicureans in *ND* 1.57–124, it seems unlikely that Carneades himself wasted much time on them.

In fact, from the Stoic perspective, Epicureans and sceptics constitute something of an unholy alliance. Velleius prefaces his account of Epicurean theology in *ND* 1.18–41 with just the kind of dismissive doxography that the sceptics themselves liked to give. His detailed criticisms of such philosophers as Anaxagoras, Xenophanes, Empedocles, and Plato, as well as the Stoics, include technical objections that the sceptics themselves used in their own arguments: for instance, 'An infinite god would be insentient' (*ND* 1.26, cf. Sextus, *M* 9.149); 'The elements earth, air, fire, and water are insentient' (*ND* 1.29; cf. Sextus, *M* 9.181). Sextus uses an Epicurean analysis of pleasure as the absence of pain in one of his many arguments which turn the Stoic concept of virtue against their concept of god (*M* 9.165–6).⁸ Velleius expresses his strong

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(*M* 9.178–9) pin the Stoics on a dilemma about god's powers of speech (cf. Cicero, *ND* 2.148 for Stoic treatment of discourse as 'divine'). Carneades is named by Sextus at *M* 9.140; his arguments, outlined at Cicero, *ND* 3.29–34, correspond to those in Sextus numbered above as follows: with 1–4, cf. *ND* 3.29, 32–4; with 6 and 18, cf. *ND* 3.29, 34. Cicero records nothing of Carneades corresponding to Sextus 7–15.

⁶ See n. 5 above.

⁷ For this strategy, see the classic study by Couissin 1929, and for discussions of its use, see LS vol. 1, pp. 257–8, 446–7, 456–60.

⁸ Sextus is dismissing a Stoic line of defence—that god can acquire a concept of pain without experiencing pain. He then says: 'This is naive. For, in the first place, it is impossible to get a concept of pleasure without having experienced pain' [cf. Calcidius *In Tim.* 165 = *SVF* 3.229 for Stoic vulnerability to this point] and continues κατὰ γὰρ τὴν παντὸς τοῦ ἀλγύνοντος ὑπεξαίρεσιν συνίστασθαι

approval of Cotta's criticism of the Stoics at *ND* 3.65, though it should be noted that Cotta had used Stoicism against Velleius in parts of his refutation of Epicureanism (*ND* 1.66, 121). By presenting little of their theology in the form of arguments, the Epicureans offered the sceptics a less challenging target than the Stoics. For their part, the Epicureans could not fail to applaud the kind of arguments Cotta, and presumably Carneades, used against Stoic teleology, providence, and the world-animal.

Epicurean theology, as I have said, was minimalist. But at least Stoics and Epicureans were agreed on one basic attribute of divinity—beatitude, or supremely perfect life. The question at issue between them was the nature of the being or beings which qualified for this attribute. To put it another way, where in the world or out of it should we look for a nature that answers to this preconception (*prolēpsis*)?

To understand the Stoics' theological arguments, and the sceptical criticism these evoked, the first point to stress is their thesis that the world itself is god. The Stoics, as I understand them, were not concerned in their arguments to prove the existence of god, as quasi-missionaries converting the heathen. They take the existence of god to be self-evident to everyone who has directed their eyes to the order of the heavens (Cicero, *ND* 2.4). Any such person, they presume, already 'preconceives by a definite notion of the mind that god is such as to be first, a living being, and second, pre-eminent in the whole of nature'. Balbus, Cicero's Stoic spokesman, then adds: 'I see nothing that I would rather fit to this preconception and notion of ours than, in the first instance, this very world, which, as being unsurpassable in excellence, I hold to be a living being and god' (2.45). As Malcolm Schofield has well observed,

[the Stoics, in their formal arguments, are best] interpreted as taking it to be evident that God exists, and as addressing themselves to the man who asks: where in the world can I find the blessed, *immortal*, sentient, rational, beneficent animal which I know God to be? They undertake to prove to this man that, if he will only

πέφυκεν [sc. ἡδονή]. This is a variation of Epicurus *KD* 3: ὅρος τοῦ μεγέθους τῶν ἡδονῶν ἡ παντὸς τοῦ ἀλγοῦντος ὑπεξαίρεσις. Sextus goes on: 'Secondly if this is conceded, it follows yet again that god is perishable, εἰ γὰρ τῆς τοιαύτης διαχύσεως δεκτικός ἐστι, καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον μεταβολῆς ἔσται δεκτικὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ φθαρτός ἐστιν'. Bury [Loeb edn.] translates, 'If he is receptive of such a collapse'. No: διάχυσις means diffusion, and is an Epicurean term for pleasure = absence of pain spreading all over the body. (For the term so used, cf. Plutarch *Contra beat.* 1092D.) Sextus' argument is this: if god is capable of experiencing pleasure (= removal of all pain)—εἰ ... διαχύσεως ... ἐστι—he will *also* (καὶ, omitted by Bury's trans.) be susceptible to change for the worse, i.e. pain replacing pleasure.

grant [certain propositions about rationality, animate existence, and sentience] . . . , he must accept that the world itself is just such a rational, sentient animal.[9]

(I shall come back to 'immortal' [emphasis mine] shortly.)

It is significant that the four theological syllogisms of Zeno, reported by Cicero (*ND* 2.20-2), all establish conclusions about the world: that it is rational, animate, sentient, and wise. The burden of proof, as the Stoics saw it, was on their claim that the world has the attributes of divinity. We need not ask here why this thesis was so cardinal to Stoicism.[10] Suffice it to say that its anti-Epicurean tenor is perspicuous. The Stoics' arguments refute, by implication, the concept of a mechanistic Epicurean world with its godless causes and absence of immanent rationality and providence. Anti-Epicurean comments abound in Book 2 of Cicero's *De natura deorum*.[11]

Animal or animate, sentient, and supremely excellent or virtuous—these are the basic attributes of divinity, according to the Stoic preconception, which they seek to prove hold good of the world. We are now in a position to consider how the sceptics develop arguments that reach the devastating conclusion that gods with such attributes do not exist! I will work first from Sextus Empiricus, since his account is fuller than Cicero's.

The logical form of Sextus' arguments, as normally, is Stoic, with the inferences taking the form of *modus ponens* or *modus tollens*. Schematically, they can be represented thus (omitting the few arguments which start from a disjunctive premise):

1. If P, then Q.
2. If Q, then R.
3. If R, then S.
4. But not-S.
5. Therefore not-P.

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[9] Schofield 1980, 302. The great merit of Schofield's paper is his demonstration that the Stoics, in their more careful procedures, used *prolēpsis*, one of their criteria of truth, as the basis for their claims of what a divine nature consists in: 'The philosopher should begin by consulting our common preconception of God, and then inspect the world to find the candidate which best answers to that preconception. Stoic theology not only starts with appeals to the preconception of God; it constitutes nothing but an increasingly profound and elaborate attempt to articulate the structure of rational argument (and so the rational structure of the world) which reinforces confidence in that preconception' (p. 305).

[10] The answer, in essence, has to do with the theological underpinnings of their ethical theory; see Long 1988*b*.

[11] Cf. *ND* 2.46–9, 59, 76, 82, 93, 160–2, and Plutarch *Comm. not.* 1075E.

Substitute for P, 'gods exist', for Q, 'gods are animals', for R, 'gods are sentient', and for S, 'gods are perishable'. The standard argument in Sextus' collection then takes the form: (1) If gods exist, they are animals. (2) If they are animals, they are sentient. (3) If they are sentient, they are perishable. (4) But they are not perishable. (5) Therefore they do not exist. Sextus plays variations on the premises of this argument and may present it in a more truncated or more expanded form, but his basic strategy is clear. He offers the Stoics premises about divine attributes which they are committed to accepting. He then argues that these attributes, for reasons that he adduces, imply perishability. Hence god's existence implies his perishability. But god is not perishable. Therefore he does not exist.

Let me illustrate by translating one argument in full (*M* 9.146–7).

1. If god is sentient, he is modified (*heteroioutai*).
2. If he is modified, he is susceptible to modification and change.
3. Being susceptible to change, he will in fact be also susceptible to change for the worse.
4. If so, he is also perishable.
5. But it is certainly absurd to say that god is perishable.
6. Therefore it is also absurd to claim that he exists.

This argument is typical. For his first premise, Sextus states a Stoic thesis concerning *aisthēsis*—its involving modification.[12] He then infers that sentience as so conceived implies perishability.

To take another example, consider the argument which starts from god's being 'all-virtuous'. If so, Sextus argues, god has 'greatness of soul' (*megalopsuchia*). But, by its Stoic definition, *megalopsuchia* is 'knowledge that creates superiority to contingencies'.[13] In that case, god's possession of *megalopsuchia* implies that there are contingencies to which he is superior. But this in turn implies that god experiences contingencies that disturb him. In which case, god will be perishable (*M* 9.161).

There are many details in these arguments which deserve comment.[14] But here I focus on the one which is decisive and puzzling in a way that, so far as

[12] For ἑτεροίωσις and ἀλλοίωσις in Stoic theory of sense-perception, cf. *SVF* 2.55–6.
[13] Sextus does not cite the Stoics for this definition of *megalopsuchia*, but it is almost verbatim equivalent to the Stoic definition recorded by DL 7.93 (*SVF* 3.265).
[14] They are treated only cursorily in the standard histories of ancient scepticism by Brochard 1923 and Dal Pra 1975, and I know of no other discussions.

I am aware, has not been noticed. The anti-Stoic tenor of these arguments is obvious. Their crucial step, as I have indicated, is the inference from a Stoic attribute of god to god's perishability. Now whatever we may think of Sextus' logic, one would suppose, in the absence of contrary evidence, that Stoics should be highly embarrassed by this inference. Sextus, at an early stage in his routine, notes that god's perishability is contrary to 'the common conception' (*M* 9.143), and the Stoics' own appeals to common conceptions were notorious. The Epicureans regarded the imperishability of god as his cardinal attribute along with blessedness; it is a feature of our preconception of him. Was it not the same in Stoicism?

Schofield refers to the passage in Cicero *ND* 2.45 where Balbus reports the Stoics' 'preconception' of god.[15] Schofield takes it that the Stoics *en bloc* have a preconception of god which agrees with that of the ordinary person, who regards immortality and beneficence as two of the attributes of god, and that the Stoics undertake to prove that the world has these attributes. But Balbus actually says nothing explicitly about either immortality or beneficence. He specifies only two attributes — 'animate' and 'outstandingly excellent in the whole of nature' (*animans, deinde ut in omni natura nihil eo sit praestantius*).

A few lines later, Balbus retorts to Epicurus as follows:

He will never shift me from the point that even he himself approves — for he holds that gods exist because there must be some outstanding nature better than anything else. But for sure nothing is better than the world. Nor can it be doubted that something animate and sentient and rational and intelligent is better than anything that lacks these features. Thus it turns out that the world is animate, sentient, intelligent, and rational. From which it follows that the world is god.

Not a word here about immortality. Running through the earlier arguments of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, I find it neither assumed nor proved that what is divine must be immortal or imperishable. The arguments all turn on the animation, sentience, intelligence, and excellence of god, with the object of showing that these are properties of the world. I cannot think that the glaring omission of imperishability is inadvertent. If, as an explanation of its absence, we take imperishability to be implicit in 'outstanding excellence', why are rationality and virtue singled out and made explicit?

Now another puzzle. The origin of Sextus' arguments goes back to Carneades.[16] But, as reported in Cicero, Carneades' arguments do not, like those

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[15] Schofield 1980, 301.   [16] See n. 5 above.

of Sextus, start from the premise, If gods exist, they are F, and conclude that F is incompatible with the gods' existence. In fact, god or gods are not mentioned as such in any of Carneades' arguments. The conclusion of all his arguments in *ND* 3.29–34 is that no body or living thing is everlasting. That constitutes a proof of the gods' non-existence only on the unstated assumption that gods, if they existed, must be *living bodies that are everlasting*. Carneades' arguments start from such premises as, Every living thing is naturally sentient, Every living thing must feel pleasure and pain, and conclude that sentience, etc. implies non-everlastingness. It is left to the reader to infer that the non-everlastingness of living bodies renders it impossible that there be gods.

The premises of Carneades' arguments introduce attributes of living bodies that the Stoics take to apply to the world, and therefore to god: for example, susceptibility to change, sentience, appetition. He could take it that Stoics, and informed members of his audience, would recognize the Stoa as his principal target, even though his arguments are formulated in highly general terms. It seems, then, that his dialectical strategy is as follows: Stoics must surely accept the common conception of gods as everlasting or immortal; but, as conceived by the Stoics, god, that is, the world, is not everlasting or immortal; therefore, god, as conceived by the Stoics, does not exist. This simple strategy will account for the absence of any explicit conclusion concerning the non-existence of the gods: if nothing like a Stoic god can be everlasting or immortal, nothing like a Stoic god can exist.

But, if this is the correct interpretation of Carneades' arguments, puzzlement intensifies. Sextus and Carneades, it seems, seek to discomfit the Stoics by showing that their theology is radically incoherent and self-contradictory. Their sceptical arguments presume that the Stoics want to retain the common conception of god as immortal or everlasting and to combine this with a set of divine attributes that are inconsistent with immortality and everlastingness. If that presumption were unequivocally correct, the Stoics would be exposed as absurdly simple-minded. Yet, as we have seen, immortality and everlastingness are notably absent from the Stoic proofs of the world's divinity in Cicero, *De natura deorum*, and from Balbus' account of the Stoic preconception of god. Are the sceptics, then, guilty of *ignoratio elenchi*? How did individual Stoics view immortality or everlastingness as a divine attribute?

At *ND* 2.85 Balbus says: '[The world's coherence] must be either everlasting in the very same structure that we see, or certainly very long-lasting, enduring for a virtually unmeasurable time.' Balbus treats these alternatives

as insignificantly different. But they are not. Before the second century BC, the orthodox Stoic view, the view of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, whose arguments for the world's divinity are recorded in *De natura deorum*, was Balbus' second alternative: our world is not everlasting; it will eventually end in the conflagration (*ekpurōsis*).[17]

In order to reconcile the conflagration with their doctrine that our world and certain of its constituents are divine, the founding fathers of Stoicism were compelled to reject immortality or indestructibility as a necessary attribute of gods. Plutarch seizes on this point for one of his most virulent objections to Stoicism:

One might perhaps chance upon barbaric and savage tribes that have no conception of god, but not a single man has there been who having a conception of god did not conceive him to be indestructible and everlasting. At any rate, those who have been called atheists, Theodorus and Diagoras and Hippo and their like, did not venture to say of divinity that it is subject to destruction but did not believe that there is anything indestructible, preserving the preconception of god while not admitting the existence of what is indestructible. Chrysippus and Cleanthes, however, who in theory have, so to speak, filled full of gods heaven, earth, air, and sea, have held that none of all these many is indestructible or everlasting except Zeus alone, in whom they consume all the rest. ... They ... state expressly that all the other gods have come into being and will be destroyed by fire.[18]

Elsewhere (*St. rep.* 1052A) Plutarch quotes this excerpt from Book 3 of Chrysippus' *On gods*:

Corresponding to a difference of constituent principle some [gods], therefore, are said to be subject to generation and to destruction and others to be unsubject to generation. ... For sun and moon and the rest of the gods, since they have a similar principle of constitution, are subject to generation, but Zeus is everlasting. ... Similar assertions will be made about decaying ... for the [rest of the gods] are subject to destruction but the parts of [Zeus] are indestructible.

[17] For discussion, cf. Mansfeld 1979 and Chapter 12 of this volume. Balbus, speaking as a post-Panaetian Stoic in *ND* 2, does refer a number of times to the *aeternitas* of the world or the celestial bodies (36, 43, 54); he speaks of human happiness as equal to that of the gods in everything except immortality (153); and he says that an argument of Zeno's proving that the world is rational can also be used to prove its being *aeternum* (21). But, as I noted above, Balbus displays his amateurishness as a philosopher in his indifference to whether the world is truly everlasting or only immeasurably long. His untechnical references to *aeternitas* tell us nothing about early Stoicism.

[18] *Comm. not.* 1075A-C, transl. H. Cherniss, Loeb edn. (the following excerpts from Plutarch are also from Cherniss' translation). Philo of Alexandria also criticizes the implications of *ekpurōsis* for the perishability of gods: *Aet. mundi* 47. See *SVF* 2.625 for a doxographical account of *ekpurōsis*, which explains that it is only 'the gods not subject to destruction' (θεοὺς τοὺς μὴ ὑποκειμένου τῇ φθορᾷ) who have foreknowledge of what will happen in successive cosmic cycles.

For Chrysippus, then, this world is divine, but it is not everlasting. Zeus, the 'active principle' of the universe, *is* everlasting, but he is not simply coextensive with this world.[19]

Since Chrysippus rejected indestructibility or everlastingness as a necessary attribute of gods, he presumably did not regard it as part of the Stoic preconception of divinity. That fits the account of this preconception reported by Balbus in Cicero, *ND* 2. 45, and discussed above. It should now be clear that the sceptics, in fastening upon the perishability or non-everlastingness of gods with Stoic attributes, cannot be attacking the theology of Chrysippus directly. Were that so, they would certainly be guilty of *ignoratio elenchi*. A philosopher who allows some gods to be perishable would escape unscathed from arguments that deduce gods' non-existence from their perishability.

It is true that Zeus, whom Chrysippus regarded as an exceptional deity in his everlastingness, falls within the scope of Carneades' arguments since they conclude that *no* living body can be everlasting. But a moment's reflection on that observation shows why Carneades' arguments would be paradoxical if Chrysippus himself were their target. With the exception of Zeus, every god including the present world is non-everlasting according to Chrysippus. Yet the only gods whose existence is undermined by Carneades' arguments are everlasting ones!

What we need, to account for the prevailing tenor of the sceptic critique, is a Stoic of suitable date who differed from Chrysippus in insisting upon indestructibility as a necessary attribute of god. Plutarch, in the very context of *De stoicorum repugnantiis* where he criticized Chrysippus, as cited above, provides the ideal candidate—Antipater of Tarsus, head of the Stoa in the middle of the second century BC, and the school's principal defender against Carneades.

Plutarch, continuing his criticism of Chrysippus, writes (*St. rep.* 1051E–F):

One may say, however, that no one supposes god to be subject to destruction and generation. Not to mention any of the others, Antipater of Tarsus in his book *On the gods* writes word for word as follows: 'As a preliminary to the whole discourse

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[19] For evidence and discussion of Zeus as the world's active principle, cf. LS ch. 44. Chrysippus' precise position on the world's destructibility is more complex than Plutarch's criticisms indicate, though this does not affect points I have made above. For Chrysippus, 'our world' is a temporally finite structure, but it is also one of an infinite series of identical worlds, separated from one another by an infinite sequence of conflagrations. The conflagration will destroy 'our world,' but it will not destroy the κόσμος *simpliciter*, since, during the conflagration, the κόσμος is coextensive with everlasting Zeus. See LS ch. 46, and the discussions cited above, n. 17.

we shall take a concise reckoning of the clear apprehension which we have of god. Well then, we conceive god to be an animate being, blessed and indestructible and beneficent towards human beings.' Then, explaining each of these predicates, he says: 'Moreover, all human beings hold them to be indestructible.' In that case, Chrysippus is not one of Antipater's 'all human beings'.

A plausible philosophical debate now suggests itself. Chrysippus, and perhaps his Stoic predecessors, entertained the notion that some gods are perishable. This flew in the face of popular religious tradition, but it was unavoidable if the Stoics were to accommodate the gods of that tradition—sun, moon, and so on—within a world which had a beginning and an end. For complex reasons, the early Stoics rejected the Aristotelian conception that our world is everlasting.

Doubts about the conflagration, however, and hence the present world's eventual destruction, began with Diogenes of Babylon, Chrysippus' successor as head of the Stoa. Philo of Alexandria, who reports this (*De aeternitate mundi* 76–7), adds: 'Boethus of Sidon and Panaetius . . . gave up the conflagrations and regenerations, and deserted to the holier doctrine of the entire world's indestructibility.' In other words, what underlies Balbus' bland disjunction, 'everlasting or very long-lasting', is actually a radical difference of opinion between early and later Stoics on the question of the world's destructibility.

In all probability, it was the dialectic of Carneades which prompted later Stoics to diverge from Chrysippus on this point. No direct testimony to this effect survives, but a passage of Cicero's *Academica* (2.119), which may well go back to Carneades, pits the Aristotelian conception of an everlasting world against the Stoic conflagration. Nor is it difficult to imagine Carneades anticipating Plutarch in ridiculing the very notion of perishable gods and prompting Diogenes of Babylon's doubts about the conflagration. Along comes Antipater, Diogenes' successor. Faced with Carneades' presumed critique of perishable gods, he formulates a preconception of god, as reported by Plutarch, whereby imperishability is a necessary attribute. Now the sceptical arguments of Carneades and Sextus fall into place, and avoid *ignoratio elenchi*. Antipater's god, as Plutarch reports, is an animate *and* imperishable being. That is precisely the conjunction which the sceptical arguments maintain to be untenable.

Since Antipater held gods to be imperishable, we might suppose that he too rejected the doctrine of the cosmic conflagration. Yet, he is included along with Zeno, Chrysippus, and Posidonius as a Stoic who discussed 'the

generation and destruction of the world' (DL 7.142). 'Discussed', of course, need not imply 'defended'. According to Diogenes Laertius it was in Book 10 of his *On the world* that he dealt with this subject. This contrasts with Chrysippus and Posidonius, who dealt with it in 'first' books (DL *loc. cit.*), and may cast doubt on Antipater's defence of the thesis. However that may be, Antipater would have egregiously contradicted himself if he had treated the world as both divine and destructible.

We have seen that the sceptics infer perishability of gods, and therefore their non-existence, from their having such attributes as sentience, appetition, and virtue. Although Chrysippus differed from Antipater over the issue of imperishability as essential to anything divine, he would certainly have agreed with Cicero's Balbus in saying: 'The world-nature has all the motions of volition and impulses and desires, which the Greeks call *hormai*, and acts in agreement with these just like ourselves who are moved by our minds and senses' (*ND* 2.58). In other words, the Stoics' world-animal, though not anthropomorphic in body, is so in mind.

Perhaps the chief strength of the sceptical arguments we have been studying is to suggest that the Stoics have not faced up to the difficulty of treating the world as divine in the sense of its being like a superlative human being. The more we think of the world in this way, the less it may appear to satisfy conceptions of god, as generally understood. This explains, I take it, why the sceptics seek to infer perishability from the very attributes—sentience, virtue, and so on—which the Stoics adduce as evidence of the world's divine life. Although that strategy applies to Antipater rather than Chrysippus, sceptics could say that Chrysippus is in even worse trouble. Like Antipater he is committed to treating the world as unacceptably anthropomorphic, and he does not even attempt to accommodate imperishability as an essential feature of anything divine. Thus he has signally failed to adduce empirical evidence that the world satisfies our intuitions of the perfection characteristic of a god.[20]

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[20] Cf. Philo in David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. H. D. Aiken (New York, 1975), 16: 'But as all perfection is entirely relative, we ought never to imagine that we comprehend the attributes of this divine Being, or to suppose that his perfections have any analogy or likeness to the perfections of a human creature. . . . He is infinitely superior to our limited view and comprehension, and is more the object of worship in the temple than of disputation in the schools.' At Cicero, *ND* 3.38 Cotta, probably drawing on Carneades, offers the Stoics a somewhat similar argument: we cannot assign to god any of the virtues, as defined by Stoics, since they are not compatible with a divine nature. Yet a god that lacks virtue is inconceivable.

To all this, if I were Chrysippus, I should reply as follows: 'It is true that our world, on my view, is not literally everlasting. But its life is so immensely long and stable that we are not impressed by the way you sceptics focus upon its perishability. Nor are we impressed by your manner of inferring perishability from such attributes as sentience and virtue. We do indeed attribute these latter features to the world, and claim that they are essential to anything divine. But nothing in our philosophy commits us to the view that the world-animal's sentience or virtue implies its perishability in the manner you maintain. As for everlastingness in general, why should we take this to be a necessary attribute of divinity? Supreme goodness and happiness, which we take to be divine attributes, do not depend, in our view, upon an infinite lifetime. In alerting our audience to the world's divinity, we are directing their attention to a being which, in our judgement, is worthy of all the aesthetic, intellectual, and ethical evaluation it would be reasonable to ascribe to a god. In retrospect we Stoics acknowledge that it was unwise to try to prove theological propositions *more geometrico*.[21] But though we made ourselves vulnerable in that way, we are not inclined to amend our theology. After all, as the most modern thinkers say, theological argument is designed to make it *more probable than not* that god exists and has a certain kind of nature. If you are so sure of being able to refute us, why do you find it necessary to produce such a plethora of arguments? We conclude that you don't know of one which is decisive.'[22]

[21] Cf. Balbus' remarks on the vulnerability of Zeno's syllogisms, the doctrinal content of which escapes Academic criticism when expounded *uberius et fusius* (Cicero, *ND* 2.20). For a fine discussion of Zeno's dialectical purposes in formulating such arguments, see Schofield 1983.

[22] For Carneades' use of the sorites in his arguments against Chrysippus' appropriation of popular polytheism, see Barnes 1982*b* and Burnyeat 1982*b*.

7

Astrology: arguments pro and contra

One of the special sciences which Sextus Empiricus attacked was astrology. From a modern viewpoint it may seem surprising that he regarded astrology as worthy of serious refutation alongside such subjects as grammar, mathematics, and music. But in later antiquity, though there was considerable opposition to astrology by philosophers, its defendants could include scientists of the first rank, most notably the astronomer Ptolemy. Arguments for and against the main principles of the subject have a continuous history from the second century BC up to the time of Augustine. Otto Neugebauer, one of the greatest authorities on ancient astronomy, is a good guide to the right historical perspective:

Its actual development [i.e. horoscopic astrology] must be considered as an important component of Hellenistic science . . . To Greek philosophers and astronomers, the universe was a well defined structure of directly related bodies. The concept of predictable influence between these bodies is in principle not at all different from any modern mechanistic theory . . . Compared with the background of religion, magic, and mysticism, the fundamental doctrines of astrology are pure science.[1]

Fortunately the validity of astrology is not my theme. I shall be concerned rather with three stages of a complex debate, which began with Stoics and Academics and continued into Neoplatonism and Christianity. Following some historical preliminaries, Part II will be 'the controversy according to Cicero', which establishes the chief foundations of later argument. In Parts III and IV I will consider Ptolemy's defences of astrology, and his success in

[1] Neugebauer 1962, 171.

meeting sceptical criticism as represented by Cicero, Favorinus, and Sextus Empiricus, glancing for comparison at Manilius. Finally, in Part V, some later developments will be sketched: the positive arguments of Firmicus Maternus, the qualified criticisms of Plotinus, and the attacks of Augustine.[2]

I HISTORICAL PRELIMINARIES

The experts seem to agree that horoscopic astrology or genethlialogy, based upon the position of planets in the zodiacal signs, was virtually unknown or neglected in Greece before the third century BC.[3] Little can be inferred from a disapproving comment about Chaldaean predictions, attributed to Eudoxus by Cicero (*Div.* 2.87), and a statement on their 'most amazing science' (*theōria*)—predicting individuals' lives (as well as weather)—ascribed to Theophrastus by Proclus (*In Tim.* 285F).[4] The earliest known horoscope is Babylonian, of 410 BC; but the earliest Greek horoscope is a relief in Northern Syria signifying an event of 7 July 62 BC, the apotheosis (or coronation by Pompey) of Antiochus I of Commagene.[5] A firmer datum for Greek familiarity with Babylonian astrology is the history of Babylon written in Greek in about the year 280 by the Babylonian Berosus.[6] Berosus settled on the island of Cos, and his work certainly gave an account of Babylonian astrology which stimulated further research.

In the *Natural Questions* 3.29.1 (cf. Stoic Heraclitus, *Hom. alleg.* 53) Seneca reports connections posited by Berosus between universal conflagrations and deluges and the movement of the planets. 'Earthly things will burn when all the planets which now move in different orbits come

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[2] I have been greatly helped by the indispensable work of Bouché-Leclercq 1899. Its main theme is astrological theory and practice, but ch. 16, 'L'Astrologie dans le monde romain', discusses philosophical responses to astrology on pp. 570–609. Other sections of this chapter consider astrology in relation to Roman society and also the attitude of the early Church. For more recent work on technical aspects of astrology see esp. Gundel 1966; Boll 1950; and for texts of horoscopes, Neugebauer and van Hoesen 1959. For general background see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, pp. 435–9, vol. 2, pp. 629–36; Cumont 1960; Dodds 1951, 245 f., 261 f.; Festugière 1944–54, vol. 1, pp. 89 ff.; Dill 1905, 45, 446 ff.

[3] Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 37 ff.; Cumont 1960, 31 ff. (who thought the Greeks before Alexander the Great knew of astrology but were too scientifically discriminating to pay heed to it); Neugebauer 1962, 188.

[4] On these passages see Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 27, 62 n. 3; Cumont 1962, 31; Neugebauer 1962, 187 f.

[5] Neugebauer 1962, 187; Dörrie 1964, 201–7.

[6] Vitruvius 9.6; Josephus *c. Apion* 1.129: see Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 36 ff.; Neugebauer 1962, 157.

together in the sign of Cancer, and are so distributed in the same path that a straight line can pass through all their spheres.' In the Stoic theory of *ekpurōsis* the 'world conflagration' occurs when the planets return to the same position they occupied at the beginning of cosmogony (Nemesius, *SVF* 2.625). The theories of Berosus are sufficiently similar to suggest that he or doctrines like his may have been taken up enthusiastically in the early Stoa.

Berosus' dates are attractively close to Zeno's later life in Athens. According to Cicero, Zeno said that the aether is god; that a 'rational principle' (*ratio*) which pervades all nature is furnished with divine power; and that this power belongs to the stars, and to the years, months, and seasons (*ND* 1.36). All this, together with the general principles of Stoicism, might incline us to regard Zeno as strongly sympathetic to Babylonian astrology. But caution is necessary.

The Stoic concept of universal 'sympathy' was to become the first axiom of philosophical astrology and is constantly stated by Manilius (e.g. 1.247–54, 2.60–81). There is every reason to think that Zeno himself established this principle of Stoic cosmology, so fundamental to the causal theory and ethical doctrine. No doubt, too, he and his successors eagerly drew upon all available support for natural signs which reveal the ordered nature of the cosmos and provide material for living accordingly. In Stoicism the existence of the gods requires the validity of divination.[7] But no texts actually associate Zeno or Cleanthes with *astrological* divination;[8] and the only evidence which seems to give Chrysippus' belief in horoscopes is the famous argument in Cicero's *De fato* concerning the analysis of the conditional: 'If someone is born at the rising of the Dog Star, he will not die at sea.'[9] The context in which Cicero states this conditional, as a paradigm case of astrological principles, is concerned with the modalities of statements referring to the future, and Chrysippus' disagreement with Diodorus Cronus. Cicero wants to develop a contradiction between Chrysippus' claim that what will never happen may still be possible and his support for divination, since divination appears to

[7] Cicero, *Div.* 2.41 (*SVF* 2.1193); ibid. 1.82–4 (*SVF* 2.1192).

[8] Plutarch records the story that Cleanthes wanted Aristarchus impeached for his 'impiety' in making the earth rotate against a stationary sky, *De facie* 923A (*SVF* 1.500). But this implies nothing about astrology.

[9] *Fat.* 6.12–8.16. On the evidence of actual Greek horoscopes the example is anomalous in working from the position of a fixed star. Greek horoscopes were regularly cast with reference to the position of the planets at cardinal points, mid-heaven, etc. (see the material in Neugebauer and van Hoesen 1959).

exclude the possibility of Fabius' dying at sea if he was born at the rising of the Dog Star. For Cicero's purpose any prediction, expressed as a conditional, would serve.

Certainly, from the *De fato* on its own, one could suppose that Chrysippus' defence of divination rested in part upon astrology; and the weight of modern scholarship has impressed upon us the decisive role of the Stoics as defenders of astrology.[10] But in the *De divinatione* itself the predictions with which Chrysippus is linked are exclusively oracles and dreams. It was on these, and not on astrology, that he wrote his two books dealing with divination (1.6). The case for divination, set out by Quintus in Book 1, mentions astrology only in passing at the very end, and the name associated with it there is Posidonius (130).

Cicero's counter-arguments in Book 2, owing much to Carneades, focus equally on dreams, oracles, and portents interpreted by augury. But he does include one passage (87–99) on 'Chaldaean apparitions' (*Chaldaeorum monstra*), setting out and then seeking to demolish the principles of astrology.[11] Nothing in Book 1 corresponds to this. He prefaces it by saying that Panaetius is the only Stoic who has rejected astrological predictions (88); and he concludes his primary criticisms with the question: 'Do you observe that I am not stating Carneades' arguments but those of the Stoics' president, Panaetius?' (*Div.* 2.97). Within this section mention is made of Diogenes of Babylon (90), who succeeded Chrysippus as head of the Stoa. He, says Cicero, gave qualified support to astrology, holding that predictions of dispositional characteristics could validly be given but not particular details of an individual's future life.

Since Cicero explicitly drew on Panaetius, not Carneades, for his primary refutation of astrology, it seems probable that astrology was at most a minor topic in Carneades' many arguments against Chrysippus on divination. Certainly that is not the only possible explanation for Cicero's use of Panaetius here; for he is obviously enjoying the opportunity of setting one Stoic against others. But the general conclusion seems to me inescapable:

[10] All the standard books insist on the central importance of the Stoics in the Greek assimilation of astrology, but Bouché-Leclercq 1899 is honest enough (p. 33) to admit the difficulty of assessing the influence of astrology on Stoicism. The older authorities were writing at a time when it was fashionable to see Posidonius' trade-mark everywhere, e.g. Cumont 1960, 47 ff.

[11] *Chaldaeorum monstra* is plainly a pejorative expression. 'Chaldaean', i.e. Babylonian, is one of the stock names for astrologer. It does not exclude Greeks, see Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 546.

astrology was at most a subordinate feature of the earliest Stoic interest in divination.[12] The most likely explanation of this is historical. If Bouché-Leclercq and other experts are right, the Greeks did not simply take over Babylonian astrology. Bouché-Leclercq (1899, 61) thought that the final form of the Greek zodiac was not reached before the time of Hipparchus, mid-second century BC. Later research seems to show that the artificial division into twelve equal segments of thirty degrees was already in use in Babylonia in the fourth century.[13] But Neugebauer agrees that 'the evidence for direct borrowings from Babylonian concepts remains exceedingly thin. The main structure of the astrological theory is undoubtedly Hellenistic.'[14]

If this is correct, it helps to explain why astrology became of substantial interest to the Stoa from the mid-second century BC, the period of Hipparchus, but not apparently earlier.[15] Greek astrology differs from early Babylonian in its concern with ordinary individuals' horoscopes. The calculation of birth times, planetary angles and aspects, and the relevant degree of the zodiac was a highly complex task. Developments in Hellenistic astronomy seem to have been a prime determinant of the theoretical foundations of horoscopic astrology which also drew heavily on standard concepts of later Greek physics.[16] In short, the system as we know it in Manilius and later writers was probably a creation of the second century BC, if not later. This seems the most economical explanation of the virtual silence of Chrysippus and Carneades, the qualified approval of Diogenes of Babylon, the opposition of Panaetius, and the wholesale support of Posidonius.

I say 'wholesale support' of Posidonius. Yet even this putative fact may be based more on the convenient assumptions of modern scholars than on

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[12] As Dodds 1951 acutely notes, 262 n. 57, 'earlier Stoics' (i.e. than Diogenes of Babylon) 'had perhaps not thought it necessary to express any view, since Cicero says definitely that Panaetius (Diogenes' immediate successor) was the only Stoic who *rejected* astrology, while Diogenes is the only one he quotes in its favour'. See also Schiche 1875. But in the obscure train of thought at Cic. *Fat.* 4.8 Chrysippus is probably being supposed to claim that *astrorum adfectio* does apply to all terrestrial things.

[13] Neugebauer 1962, 102f. The earliest extant Greek text which divides the ecliptic circle into 360 degrees is the Alexandrian Hypsicles' *Anaphorikos* ('On ascensions'), a work of the later 2nd century BC, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, p. 424.

[14] Neugebauer 1962, 170.

[15] This is the date favoured for the first appearance of the influential Egyptian records fabricated under the names of Nechepso and Petosiris, see Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 563 f.; Fraser 1972, vol. 1, pp. 436 f. It also fits the time proposed for the oldest extant star catalogue recorded in the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, cf. Neugebauer 1962, 68, 171.

[16] Though Diodorus Siculus, writing in the latter part of the 1st century BC, found Babylonian astrology vastly superior to Greek thought, 2.29.

hard evidence. Certainly Augustine, following Cicero presumably (but not in our Cicero), calls him 'much given to astrology';[17] and he attacks him for holding that simultaneous illness of two brothers pointed to their being born and conceived under the same configuration of planets. Posidonius was willing to cite connections between celestial and human events as evidence for universal 'sympathy'.[18] But no technical details of astrology are linked with his name. Is that only the accident of transmission? Posidonius' general approach to divination seems to have been an open-ended interest which fell short of claiming a causal connection between celestial or other natural events and particular human fortunes. He believed that valid predictions could be made from 'signs in nature' (*Div.* 1.130). What we may call 'hard' astrology claimed more than this.[19] The 'aspects' of the planets within a zodiacal sign were not just indications of an individual's destiny but efficient causes of it. Posidonius does not claim this in any of our evidence. He thought it worthwhile to note connections 'even if the causes could not be found' (*Div.* 2.47). This is Quintus' procedure in Cicero, *Div.* 1: he insists time and again that he is interested in investigating occurrences which are possible evidence of divination, whatever may be their causal explanation (e.g. 13, 16, 23, 35).

If even Posidonius was not a dyed-in-the-wool defender of technical astrology, we can better understand why the subject was treated sketchily and dismissively by Cicero. He concentrated his attack on the Stoics' support for other forms of divination, passing over, one presumes, his familiarity with Nigidius Figulus, the most famous contemporary Roman expert on astrology.[20] By the time of the later Pyrrhonists and Plotinus astrology was too powerful to be dismissed as 'incredible raving' (*Div.* 2.90). The explanation of this power belongs to the social history of the early Roman empire rather than to approval of astrology by serious thinkers. Silver age Latin literature is stuffed with lurid references to portents; and the importance of astrology extends from grass-roots superstition to imperial addiction.[21] Yet even Seneca, outside the tragedies, endorses astrology only once or twice, and

[17] *Civ. Dei* 5.2 = F 111 Edelstein/Kidd.   [18] Cf. Cic. *Div.* 2.33 ff., *Fat.* 3.5.

[19] I will distinguish, during this paper, between 'hard' astrology, which claims that heavenly bodies are both signs *and* causes of human affairs, and 'soft' astrology, which regards heavenly bodies only as signs of human affairs without also attributing a causal role to the heavenly bodies; see below on Plotinus.

[20] Cicero refers to Figulus' interests in 'occult' arts in the introduction to his translation of Plato's *Timaeus*.

[21] See Suetonius, *Tiberias* 69.

then in vague general terms.[22] Epictetus ignores it, but criticizes people's reliance on augury, without denying the validity of divination (*Diss.* 2.7). Marcus Aurelius, though he seems to have had a tame astrologer, follows Epictetus in criticizing those who resort to divination when they have the innate resources to live well (*Med.* 2.13). If Tacitus is reliable, the general run of Stoics of the first century AD explicitly rejected astrology as the basis of their determinism, which was derived from 'the principles and linkages of natural causes'.[23] Manilius and others claimed the Stoics as allies. But the modern consensus on unqualified Stoic support for astrology has alarmingly frail foundations.

II THE CONTROVERSY ACCORDING TO CICERO

Here is Cicero's account of 'Chaldaean genethlialogy':

They say that the starry circle, which the Greeks call zodiac, contains a power such that each single part of that circle moves and changes the sky in a different way according to the positions of all the stars in these and the neighbouring regions at any time; and they say that that power is modified by the planets, either when they enter that very part of the circle containing someone's birth, or that part which possesses some familiarity (*coniunctum*) or harmony (*consentiens*) with the birth sign—they call these triangles and squares. For since with the time of year and seasons such great changes of the sky take place at the approach and withdrawal of the stars (i.e. planets), and since the sun's power brings about the effects which we see, they think it is not only plausible but also true that howsoever the atmosphere is modified so the births of children are animated and shaped, and by this force their mentalities, habits, mind, body, action, fortune in life and experience are fashioned. (*Div.* 2.89)

This is 'hard' astrology (see n. 19 above), but pretty crudely expressed.[24] Cicero is aware that horoscopes are determined both by the sign of the zodiac, under which someone's birth falls, and by the aspects of the signs and their relations to the planets. But his one attempt to state a

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[22] Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 552 n.3, cites *Prov.* 5.7, *Consol. ad Marciam* 18.3, but builds his case on the more dubious claim, 'comme stoïcien, Sénèque croyait à l'astrologie'. In *NQ* Seneca's interest in predictive powers concentrates on lightning (2.32 ff.), though he digresses to augury and astrology (2.32.7–8). He accepts stellar influences on human affairs but questions the astrologers' ability to specify them.

[23] *Principia et nexus naturalium causarum*, *Ann.* 6.22. The context is Tiberius' astrological prophecy of Galba's principate. Tacitus does not explicitly identify the determinists, who do not derive 'destiny from the planets' (*fatum e vagis stellis*), as Stoics. But that identification is implied by the ethical views he ascribes to them.

[24] After reaching this conclusion I found I had been anticipated by Pease 1923, 497–9.

technical point goes astray. It was standard doctrine that the triangular aspects of the signs, worked out by dividing the twelve divisions into four equilateral triangles—for example, Aries, Leo, Sagittarius—are 'harmonious' (*sumphōnoi*) and particularly beneficent.[25] But it was equally accepted that the quadratic aspects, established by inscribing three squares within the circle, were 'disharmonious' (*asumphōnoi*) and maleficent.[26] Cicero however seems to equate familiarity (*coniunctum*, Gk. *sunoikeiōsis*), which covers both harmonious and disharmonious aspects, with harmony (his *consentiens* presumably rendering *sumphōnos*), a basic confusion.

For all its deficiencies, Cicero's account does contain the single most powerful reason which the astrologers could cite in their own favour, and cite it they did *ad nauseam*. The sun brings about visible effects of fundamental importance to the earth; and those effects coincide with different positions of the planets at different times. Since the atmosphere is directly affected by celestial powers, we are to infer that it also transmits less evident influences which control human births and fortunes. (This point is developed with infinitely more sophistication by Ptolemy.)

Cicero's critical comments establish points against astrology which recur constantly in subsequent arguments. He begins with the problem of twins (2.90), a difficulty for astrology developed at great length by Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 5.2–6).[27] Twins have similar appearance (*forma*), but their lives often take very different courses. Unlike Augustine, Cicero leaves it to the reader to infer why twins are a fundamental difficulty for astrology. His point seems to be the inconsistency of similar appearances and different fortunes. Twins, being born at almost identical times, look like a good example for astrologers who can explain their similar appearances by reference to the influence of similar atmospheric and celestial conditions. It should then follow, according to astrology, that their subsequent lives will take similar courses. Yet this is disproved by historical examples.[28]

Cicero's second objection is astronomical (2.91). The astrologers take the moon's conjunctions with the planets as observable evidence of causes which

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[25] See Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 169. [26] Ibid. 170.

[27] Cicero (*Div.* 2.90) says it was the problem of twins which persuaded the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon that astrology could predict only natural character and aptitude, not the specific circumstances of a future life.

[28] Nigidius Figulus had an answer to this challenge: the heavens move at such speed that even a tiny interval of time (such as that separating the birth of twins) makes a vast difference to the planetary relationships in the zodiac, Augustine, *Civ. Dei.* 5.3. This prompted the obvious rejoinder, how could such a fleeting moment be grasped by the astrologer?, Favorinus *ap.* Aul. Gell. 14.1.26.

control people's births. But we know from mathematics that the moon, whose light is borrowed from the sun, is very close to the earth by comparison with its distances from Mercury, Venus, and the sun, and that the remaining planets together with the heaven itself are vastly distant from the sun. 'What contact then over the almost infinite distance can extend to the moon or rather to the earth?'

This argument, which I will call relative distances, looks rather good at first glance. The astronomical facts are broadly accurate and the treatment of the moon as categorically similar to the planets is no doubt a weakness of all astrology. The sheer distances of the planets from the earth also present a challenge which the astrologer can reasonably be expected to answer. It is perhaps then surprising that this argument is not repeated in the principal later attacks on astrology.[29] Neither Favorinus nor Sextus uses any version of it.

The question of the earth's distance from certain heavenly bodies does arise in Geminus and in Plotinus.[30] Geminus denies that any 'effluences' from the sphere of the fixed stars reach the earth (17.16), and he also denies that the planets as well as the fixed stars can cause the earth to grow hot (17.38). But he admits that planetary effluences do fall upon the earth, and he raises no special difficulties about the moon in relation to the planets. His remarks, moreover, are only marginally significant since their context is not horoscopic astrology but the influence of heavenly bodies on the weather.[31]

Plotinus' criticisms are much more barbed. Recognizing that the planets are far below the stars which form the zodiacal signs, he finds it ridiculous that the planets should differ in their dispositions towards men according to their positions in the zodiac (2.3.3). He tartly dismisses the whole theory of planetary aspects, and is particularly effective in handling the moon's relations with the planets:

As for their statement that the moon when she is full is good in conjunction with a particular planet, but bad when she is waning, the reverse would be true, if this sort of thing is to be admitted as possible at all. For when she is full in relation to us she would be dark in the other hemisphere to the planet which stands above her ... It will make no difference whatever to the moon herself what phase she is in since half of her is always illuminated. (2.3.5)[32]

These points are closer to Cicero's objections, but they do not turn on the question of the planets' distance from the earth, nor on the moon's relative

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[29] But cf. Anon. Hermippus 2.44, cited by Pease 1923 *ad loc.*
[30] Geminus was probably Cicero's contemporary, see Aujac 1975.
[31] Thus I fail to understand Pfeiffer 1916, 59.   [32] Trans. A. H. Armstrong, Loeb edn.

closeness to the earth. Plotinus, it seems to me, is arguing with much greater insight into the nature of astrology, and his criticisms are more telling because they are more precise. As Ptolemy and Manilius make clear, an important feature of the moon's conjunction with planets, for casting horoscopes, lay in the method it provided for establishing the degree of the zodiac to be taken as a starting point for establishing the planetary influences on the birth:

We must then take the syzygy most closely preceding the birth, whether it is a new moon or a full moon . . . and . . . we must see what stars rule it (sc. the degree) at the time of the birth. (*Tetrab*. 3.2, pp. 231–3 Loeb edn., cf. Manilius 2.726 ff.)

For this purpose the relevance of the moon's relationship to the planets is geometrical. The moon's relative closeness to the earth and its problematical contact with the planets do not seem points which damage the astrology in the ways that Cicero maintains. If his blows here are glancing ones, this may explain why little use was later made of his argument from relative distances.

Cicero's third argument may be called the relativity of earthly locations (*Div*. 2.92–3). Much of it is loosely expressed, but the essential claim amounts to this: the astrologers say that the births and subsequent fortunes of everyone born at the same time are the same, *wherever they are born*. Yet elementary astronomy shows that the risings and settings of the planets do not occur at the same time in all places. Given the astrologers' doctrines about celestial influences, they must admit that people born at the same time can have different natures on account of the constant variation of the horizons. But this is inconsistent with their thesis that those born at the same time, no matter where they are born, are born under the same celestial conditions.

This argument is repeated by later sceptics, in slightly different forms. Favorinus insists that Chaldean observations can have no validity outside their own region (Aulus Gellius 14.1.7–11): although it is obvious that the astrologers' stars cause different weather at the same time in different places, they claim that in human affairs the stars always show the same face wherever they are viewed from. Sextus Empiricus uses relativity of earthly places in giving his 'most conclusive' argument, as he calls it, against the possibility of establishing an accurate horoscope (*M* 5.83–5); 'a sign of the zodiac does not appear to all at the same time . . . but that which seems to one set of people to have risen appears to others to be quite beneath the earth . . . Such relativity (or latitude dependence, as we would say) is evident from the fact that certain of the fixed stars . . . do not appear to the inhabitants of every region at the same time.'

As Bouché-Leclercq 1899 points out (581 ff.), this argument, from the relativity of places, was probably irrelevant even to Babylonian astrology; for on tablets we find such inscriptions as: 'if the moon is visible on the 30th, a good omen for Acadia, but a bad one for Syria.' As an objection to Greek astrology, as represented by Manilius or Ptolemy, it misses the mark completely. Both writers distinguish sharply between stellar determination of nations and horoscopes of individuals. Accepting the enormous regional differences between parts of the earth, they explained these by reference to a highly complex set of different planetary and zodiacal influences. Thus, according to Ptolemy, all nations fall under four quarters of the heavens, determined by the four triangular relations of the zodiac (2.3, p. 129 Loeb edn.). These quarters in turn were subdivided geographically and astronomically so that, for instance, Bithynia is situated in the south west of the north-eastern quarter. Its inhabitants, being in the quarter of Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces, whose co-rulers are Mars, Venus, and Mercury, are 'exceedingly depraved, servile, toilsome, worthless . . .' (ibid., p. 149). Manilius actually accepts the relativity argument, and writes: 'there are as many worlds as there are parts of the world, just as the stars shine upon the specific regions to which they have been allocated and shed their climate on the nations that lie beneath' (4.741–3). Place as well as time is a fundamental co-ordinate of Greek astrology, and the treatment of it occupies much of the second book of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*.

Since later authorities on Greek astrology did not accept the premise of Cicero's objection concerning their indifference to earthly locations, we may account for his point either as due to ignorance on his part (as Bouché-Leclercq 1899, does, 580 f.), or as a purely dialectical ploy. Ignorance will hardly excuse Favorinus and Sextus. But this would not be the first time in Greek philosophy when an opponent misrepresents his target in order to score a point. It does seem increasingly clear, at all events, that Cicero knew very little about Greek astrology in its developed form. It is also probable that the highly developed ethnology and regional geography in Ptolemy were the outcome of challenges to astrology to explain the common characteristics of one ethnic group and their differences from others. Cicero's next set of objections is of particular historical interest precisely because Ptolemy went out of his way to respond to many of them.

For Cicero astrology offers a complete and irreducible explanation of everything concerned with the birth, behaviour, character, and fortunes of a person. In that case, he argues, astrologers insanely ignore the enormous

changes to the sky brought about by changes of the weather, which can vary greatly between adjacent regions (*Div.* 2.94). Disallowing the weather's influence on people's births, they insist on the utterly obscure modification of the sky by the moon and stars. Furthermore, the astrologers' celestial causation totally fails to explain the obvious importance of genetics and parental influence. In addition, the time of birth cannot be relevant to the life someone lives since people born at the same moment have different dispositions and lives and fortunes—'unless,' he adds, 'we suppose that no one was conceived and born at just the same time as Africanus' (2.95). Furthermore, according to astrology, it would not be possible, as it evidently is, to change and improve, by medicine or training, defects with which someone is born (2.96). Finally, geographical variation is a much more effective candidate than lunar contact for causing the enormous physical and mental differences between nations. After detailing these objections, Cicero concludes by rejecting the vast antiquity—470,000 years—of Babylonian records concerning births (and, presumably, celestial data, 2.97).[33]

All these points, Cicero implies, were made by Panaetius. He himself purports to supplement them by four further objections which many scholars suppose to derive from Carneades.[34] The first two of these pick up one of his previous arguments and develop it, in effect, as a dilemma: many people, presumably not born under one and the same star, may have a common death, as in the battle of Cannae. But equally, there can hardly be only one star under which someone of unique character, such as Homer, was born. So, he implies, astrology can neither account for an individual's birth nor his death. Correspondingly, it fails to meet the fact that individuals born at different times may have the same destiny, and that those born at the same time differ in their fortunes (2.97). This argument, one of his strongest certainly, I will return to. A further objection, which turns up again in Favorinus (Aulus Gellius 14.1.31) and Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 5.7), concerns animals. Their fortunes should also be revealed by astrology, says Cicero, which would be absurd.[35] Lastly, Cicero achieves a rhetorical flourish by noting that horoscopes are refuted every day,

[33] The supposed antiquity of the observations was a key item in the astrologers' arguments; cf. Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 574, for other evidence.

[34] For Cicero's sources see Pease 1923, 26. In a work known to me only via Pease, Schiche 1875, argued that Cicero drew on Panaetius because, in the absence of an early Stoic defence of astrology, the Academic sceptics had not provided the contra arguments. For reasons given above I think this may well be correct in general. But it is probable, as many have held, that Cicero's concluding arguments have Academic background.

[35] Augustine (ibid.) says that some astrologers met this point by giving horoscopes of animals!

such as those predicting to the triumvirs that they would each die at home in glorious old age (2.99).

We have now surveyed Cicero's whole case against astrology. His opening objections seek to be technical, but suffer from lack of knowledge, at least when set against Manilius and Ptolemy. The subsequent arguments, though dialectical, are more pointed and, perhaps for this reason, appear to have been more influential. (Their effectiveness might be evidence of their Carneadean authorship.) In order to assess them, historically and conceptually, it seems best now to let Ptolemy himself have the floor. This may enable us to judge some of the developments in astrology, which philosophical controversy stimulated; and it will provide us with the context for evaluating the objections of Favorinus and Sextus Empiricus, Ptolemy's near contemporaries.

III PTOLEMY'S DEFENCE OF ASTROLOGY

Seldom, one could say from our own perspective, have knowledge, intelligence, and rhetorical skill been more misused than in the opening three chapters of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*.[36] He begins modestly by stressing the inferiority of astrology to astronomy in our sense of the term (1.1, pp. 3–5 Loeb edn.). Astrology does not establish the certainty which can be attained in our pure observation of heavenly bodies. In Aristotelian fashion Ptolemy contrasts the 'weakness' and 'uncertainty' of enmattered things with the everlasting invariance of the objects the astronomer studies.[37] But this concession is not sufficient to render astrology impossible: evidence shows that most events, taken quite generally, manifest the causal power of the surrounding heavens. Some have charged astrology with being completely incomprehensible on account of its particular difficulties (cf. Sextus, *M* 5.95); others have criticized it as useless on the grounds that (implying, 'assuming its predictions true') one cannot escape things that are known. Ptolemy proposes to answer these objections, by discussing the possibility and utility of astrology.

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[36] The *Tetrabiblos* has Syrus as its dedicatee, like the *Syntaxis*, but astrology is not mentioned in the astronomical work.

[37] The same point is made in the preface to the *Syntaxis* where, with reference to Aristotle, Ptolemy distinguishes the different sciences (ed. Heiberg (Leipzig, 1898), vol. 1, p. 5, lines 7 ff.); but, in un-Aristotelian vein, he rates the certainty of the results mathematics achieves above those of theology. Physics too for Ptolemy is 'conjecture' (*eikasia*) rather than 'knowledge' (*katalēpsis*) owing to 'the instability and obscurity of matter' (ibid., p. 6, lines 11 ff.).

Underpinning his entire cosmology is the Aristotelian theory of five elements, crucially modified by the Stoic belief that the movements of the *aithēr* directly affect the sublunar elements with which it is in contact (1.2, pp. 5–7 Loeb edn.). Aristotle's distinction between the heavens and the sublunar region influences Ptolemy's epistemology, as we have seen. But, as an astrologer, he cannot entertain a physical theory which undermines the unity of the cosmos. When it comes to explaining the behaviour of the five planets and the sun and moon he uses the Aristotelian theory of elementary qualities for quite un-Aristotelian purposes: assuming that the primary powers in the heavens are heat, from the sun, and moisture, exhaled from the earth, Ptolemy identifies the sun's causal efficacy with heating and drying (the Aristotelian properties of fire), and the moon's with moistening and heating (the Aristotelian properties of air). The two planets, Jupiter and Venus, share in the same powers as the moon; this nature accounts for their being regarded as beneficent. Mars and Saturn manifest extremes of dry heat and dry cold respectively; they are thus opposed to the beneficent planets. Mercury, owing to its nearness to the sun and the moon, sometimes has the power to dry and at other times the power to moisten (1.4, pp. 35–9 Loeb edn.).

This symmetrical theory of elementary powers and combinations (based upon unargued inferences from the planets' relative positions) enables Ptolemy to demythologize astrology and to relate diurnal and seasonal changes to the elemental effects of the sun, moon, and planets. The theory is also presupposed in his basic argument concerning the possibility of astrology. We are to envisage a universe in which the power of the eternal *aithēr* penetrates to and changes the entire mass of sublunar fire and air surrounding the earth, which elements in turn encompass and change earth, water, and all the contents of the earth (1.2, pp. 5–7 Loeb edn.).

Ptolemy offers three pieces of celestial evidence, in decreasing orders of obviousness. First, the sun in conjunction with the surrounding heaven is constantly 'disposing' (*diatithēsi*) things on the earth, and its regular heating and cooling effects, and so on accord with the order of its positions in the zenith.[38] Secondly, the movements of rivers, the tides, and the life-cycles of living things are 'sympathetic' to the moon, which, being the nearest heavenly body to the earth, distributes to it 'the greatest effluence'. So far so good, the sceptic may say. Now comes the third and dubious claim. But note

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[38] Note the Stoic adverbs expressing cosmic order, *tetagmenōs* and *akolouthōs* (1.2, p. 6 Loeb edn., line 14).

Ptolemy's skill in making it. With an unobtrusive 'and' (*te*) he moves to the movements of the fixed stars and planets (1.2, p. 6 Loeb edn., 4 lines up). 'Soft' astrology (see n. 19) is handled first: these movements effect very many 'indications' (*episēmasiai*, the technical word) of hot, windy, or snowy weather . . . Next, with studied vagueness, we get the 'hard' astrology: 'and further, their aspects to one another, as their contributions come together and mix together, produce very many varied changes' (p. 8 Loeb edn., lines 1–4). Now, two genitive absolutes linked by *men* and *de*: 'on the one hand, the power of the sun is dominant for the general arrangement of quality, but the remaining heavenly bodies assist or oppose in particular respects' (ibid., lines 4–7).

The logic and antitheses are beguiling. You must grant the obvious power of the sun. As for the moon, whose terrestrial influence you have already conceded, she is cleverly relegated to the *de* clause, as one of the *loipa*, the 'remaining' heavenly bodies. Another antithesis subdivides these lesser lights of auxiliary power: 'the moon more obviously and continuously, as in its new, quarter, and full phases, the stars (i.e. planets) over longer intervals and less distinctly, as in their appearances and occultations and approaches' (ibid., lines 7–11).

Is it intellectual honesty or rhetorical skill which accounts for Ptolemy's evasions here? The tough empirical argument has vanished, leaving only 'very many varied changes', through the planets' interactions, and the relative 'obscurity' of their auxiliary role as astrological appendages clinging uneasily to the powers of the sun and moon.

This chapter has a long way still to run. From now on Ptolemy's case will rest on rhetoric and dialectic. We are asked to grant, with farmers, sailors, lay-men, and animals as our supporters, that the births of living things conform to the temporal state of the heavens (1.2, pp. 8–11 Loeb edn.). True, the sailor's experience of the weather in its relation to the heavens is a fallible source for predictions. 'But if a man knows precisely the times and places of all celestial movements, and if he knows at least such potential effects as the sun's heating and the moon's moistening, and if he is capable of distinguishing the specif-ic quality resulting from the medley of everything, then what is to prevent him from being an infallible weather forecaster?' (paraphrase of pp. 10–11 Loeb edn.). 'Why too should he not be able to perceive the general quality of an individual's *idiosyncrasy* from the state of the heavens at the time of his birth? For instance, his generic type in body and soul.' And why should he not be able to perceive 'what will happen to him at different times', through

the beneficial or adverse characteristics of 'this kind of heaven for this kind of make up' (1.2, pp. 12–13 Loeb edn.).

Ptolemy remarks that the possibility of astrological knowledge is established by such considerations (ibid.). He then makes a number of important disclaimers. He grants to the critic that inexpert practitioners have given currency to the belief that even correct predictions depend upon chance. Proper astrology, moreover, has been besmirched by vulgar soothsaying, as happens too with philosophy. His strongest defence is his greatest concession. He admits that even the expert is likely to make many mistakes (1.2, pp. 14–15 Loeb edn.). This is due both to the sheer magnitude of the undertaking, but also to the only-approximate relationship between the ancient configurations of the planets, which formed the basis of the ancients' records, and the present state of the heavens. Here then, in the data of astrology, we are offered grounds for erroneous predictions.

Finally Ptolemy restores our faith in his scientific integrity by utterly disclaiming complete causal efficacy for the findings of astrology (1.2, pp. 16–19 Loeb edn.). It turns out that, in his view, the state of the heavens at birth is only the most powerful of a whole range of important contributory factors. These include genetics: a horse begets a horse, and a man begets a man, under the same celestial conditions. Geographical differences, nurture, and customs also contribute to the particular way of life. Astrology then, though necessary, is far from sufficient to explain all the details of someone's life. Yet, in spite of its fallibility, it is a divine art, and we should be grateful for what it can provide. The astrologer is quite entitled to base his predictions on any additional material from ethnology, geography, education, and so on.

In the third chapter of *Tetrabiblos* 1 Ptolemy makes the task of the critic still more difficult. His principal subject here is the utility of astrology, but the arguments which he uses to establish this also help to answer some of the standard criticisms of the art's general rationale.

Astrology, he claims, is useful because knowledge of the future is one of the mind's goods, and that knowledge has a practical application to an individual's bodily constitution (1.3, pp. 20–1 Loeb edn.). The criticism of astrology for being superfluous fails to recognize that foreknowledge of necessary events makes for mental health by inducing equanimity (pp. 22–3 Loeb edn.). Ptolemy's most effective defence draws on the earlier admission that astrology doesn't establish complete and absolute causal laws. Celestial causes are not like irrevocable divine imperatives such that no other cause can counteract them (pp. 22–31 Loeb edn.). Owing to the difference between

the immutable heavens and the changeable nature of earthly things, celestial movements provide only 'first causes'. These are of the form, such and such will happen if nothing contrary counteracts. First causes necessitate effects only if nothing stronger intervenes. Thus, on the basis of celestial conditions operative at someone's birth, in conjunction with that person's constitution, an astrologer may predict a disease *if* no natural preventive measures are taken.

The thesis that astrology identifies predisposing conditions enables Ptolemy both to defend its utility as a quasi-medicinal art, and to meet the objection that its predictions undermine human precautions. His astrologer does not advance exceptionless generalizations, but gives reasons for expecting certain occurrences. As to the supposed difficulty of vast numbers perishing at the same time (Cicero's Cannae example), Ptolemy takes the occurrence of natural or human disasters to show that the celestial causes of general effects are always more powerful than those which affect individuals in isolation (2.1, pp. 118–19 Loeb edn.). Following this principle he discusses astrology in its application to nations (Book 2) before he treats the horoscope of individuals (Books 3–4).

Even on the evidence of this brief study it should be plain that Ptolemy, or his sources, have a conception of astrology which explicitly rebuts the principal criticisms found in Cicero. Cicero's argument concerning the relativity of earthly locations is countered by the distinction between national and individual celestial influences, and the insistence that geographical and ethnic differences are the strongest effect produced by different celestial conditions. By denying that astrology identifies complete causal conditions for an individual's life, Ptolemy undermines Cicero's criticism of the omission of genetics and nurture. By maintaining that astrological predictions are conditional on the absence of countervailing causes, Ptolemy is able to accommodate Cicero's evidence for the amelioration of congenital defects. The important dilemma—different lives ensue on births at the same time versus common deaths following births at different times—is answered implicitly. Ptolemy's insistence on the effect of non-celestial causes, and his claim that general effects have stronger celestial causes than individual characteristics, enable him to provide some answer to most problem cases that could be advanced against him. He admits that many predictions are bound to fail. He does not bother to answer the problem of twins or animal horoscopes.

IV FAVORINUS, SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, AND MANILIUS

It seems highly likely that Ptolemy's astrology, both in its technical details and in its buttressing against criticism, manifests developments of the 200 years separating him from Cicero. Although I am not in a position to pronounce on the subject of his sources, his indebtedness to Posidonius, stressed by nineteenth-century scholars, seems highly dubious. On technical details Ptolemy and Manilius, 100 earlier, appear to agree in the main. But Manilius' cosmology is much more decisively Stoic, and his astrology, as we shall see, invites the kind of objections which Ptolemy took pains to avoid. Ptolemy's opening chapters, with their theoretical points and defences against criticism, probably contain a good deal of work that is his own.[39]

Support for this view can be derived from sceptical criticism. The sophist and Academic, Favorinus, may have been too old to read the *Tetrabiblos*.[40] Certainly his criticisms of astrology are close to Cicero, which has persuaded many scholars that they derive from common Academic material. Like Cicero, Favorinus takes astrology to promise that every detail of human life is controlled by the stars. He ridicules the assumption that human affairs are analogous to tidal movements in their causal connection with heavenly bodies (14.1.4). Passing over Manilian and Ptolemaic treatment of the astrology of nations, he uses Cicero's objection concerning the relativity of earthly locations (14.1.7–10). He repeats the Ciceronian dilemma concerning the lack of congruence between different lives which begin at the same time, and common deaths of those born at different times. The problem of twins and animals comes up again.

Several new objections are made. Why shouldn't there be more planets than those which have been observed?—a good, and as it turns out, correct point (14.1.11–12). Even if one concedes only the existence of the visible stars and their visibility from all locations, astrology requires an impossibly

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[39] A case for Posidonius as Ptolemy's source for his opening chapters of *Tetrab.* was stated by Boll 1894, 131 ff. Though accepted by most subsequent writers it seems to me to be a conspicuous example of the fallacies of treating intellectual history by the methods of stemmatology. Such parallels as Boll cites between Cicero, etc. and Ptolemy do not justify the supposed influence of Posidonius.

[40] Our evidence for his opposition to astrology comes from Aulus Gellius, who summarized a lecture he heard Favorinus deliver in Greek at Rome, 14. 1.1–2. For his and Ptolemy's dates see n. 46 below.

long time for its observations to be effective: records are based on the correlation between celestial movements and human affairs, but the same celestial movements will not recur for an almost infinite number of years (14.1.14–18). (Ptolemy, as has been mentioned, acknowledged the inexact correspondence between ancient records and the contemporary state of the heavens (*Tetrab.* 1.2, pp. 14–15 Loeb edn.).)

Another new point concerns the relation between stars at the time of conception and those at the time of birth.[41] Favorinus very reasonably assumes that the celestial configurations at these two times will differ, and infers that this implies two different fortunes for the same individual (14.1.19). Ptolemy, however, denies the premise of the objection, maintaining that a child is naturally born under a configuration similar to that governing its time of conception (3.1, pp. 224–7 Loeb edn.).[42]

Favorinus includes a number of not very impressive dialectical objections, which I pass over. He does, however, touch on a point which Sextus develops at much greater length—the difficulty of grasping the moment of the horoscope. It appears that astrologers had responded to the problems over twins by claiming that no two people are born at exactly the same moment.[43] Favorinus seeks to ridicule the notion that human beings could grasp the tiny intervals of time which allegedly cause such great differences in the arrangements of the heavenly bodies (14.1.26). (Ptolemy acknowledges the practical difficulty of determining the canonical degree of the zodiac, but offers lengthy instructions about this which are not mentioned by the critics (3.1–2, pp. 222–35 Loeb edn.).)

Taken generally, Favorinus' objections show little more acquaintance with Manilian or Ptolemaic astrology than do the arguments of Cicero. Sextus Empiricus, writing perhaps sixty years later, is a more effective critic. In his normal fashion he lets his opponents first develop their position, and his exposition of this is more detailed and technically proficient than the summaries of other sceptics. According to the Chaldaeans, he says, 'sympathy' between earthly and celestial things effected by 'effluences' from the latter makes the 'seven stars' efficient causes of all affairs of life, with co-operation from the signs of the zodiac (*M* 5.4–5). This then is 'hard' astrology without any of Ptolemy's concessions regarding non-celestial causes.

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[41] Cf. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 5.5.

[42] If Augustine (ibid.) is to be believed, Posidonius had already made this claim in reference to a particular pair of twins.

[43] See Bouché-Leclercq 1899, 588–9.

Sextus proceeds to outline quite accurately the basic doctrines of aspects and cardinal points etc. His refutation is divided into two parts: a brief survey of what he calls 'long-range objections', and a much longer attack 'at close quarters' (ibid. 43–8, 50–105). The detailed criticism is largely focused on the impossibility of establishing an accurate horoscope. Sextus methodically exposes the problems of defining the moment of birth or conception, the marvellous absurdity of the signalling system used to alert the observer of the sky that the birth has occurred, and the difficulty of establishing the rising star in the zodiac.[44] Some of the stock objections we have noted already are later developed, but only Sextus exploits the absurdity of associating human characteristics with the mythology of the zodiac (5.95–102).

This summary does not do justice to all his arguments. Yet, though they contain points we have not met before, their principal target is hardly Ptolemaic astrology but something much more primitive. At this point Manilius can help us to evaluate the interaction between philosophy and astrology. If Ptolemy has taken trouble to protect astrology against the standard arguments, the same can only in part be said of Manilius. He does have answers to the arguments about the relativity of earthly locations (4.696 ff.); and his guidelines for establishing a horoscope look better than the crudities attacked by Sextus (3.203–509). But he is still vulnerable to many of the stock criticisms.

He repeatedly makes the stars responsible for every circumstance of human life (e.g. 3.57 ff.). He makes wild claims about the infallibility of astrological predictions (2.132). He sees no problem in asserting that 'tiny movements of the sky' cause enormous changes of fortune (1.53–7), and that records are based on observations of the stars' return to their appropriate positions (1.58 ff.). Both of these claims are attacked by Favorinus (Aulus Gellius 14.1.15, 26). Like Ptolemy, Manilius uses the obvious effects of sun and moon as evidence for the validity of astrology in general, conceding the remote distance of the planets and their unobvious causal power (2.82, 4.869 ff.). Unlike Ptolemy, his general thesis is underpinned not by a physical theory of elementary properties, but by a Stoicizing deism which treats the human being as an image of god, seeking itself among the stars (4.886 ff.). Manilius constantly insists that 'fate rules the world' (*fata regunt orbem*, 4.14).

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[44] Ptolemy himself comments on the fallibility of the instruments used by astrologers (including the water-clock attacked by Sextus, *M* 5.75–7) apart from 'horoscopic astrolabes', *Tetrab.* 3.2, pp. 228–31 Loeb. edn.

He blandly attributes human vice and virtue alike to the sky without seriously facing problems about moral responsibility (4.108–18).

Here then we have 'hard' astrology with a veneer of philosophical colouring. It is difficult to believe that Stoic philosophers can have admired Manilius' proficiency. Against such a crude fatalism as Manilius defends many of the arguments of Cicero, Favorinus, and Sextus do well enough.

If Manilius is typical of ancient astrology—and the evidence suggests he was better than some—Ptolemy's achievement, or misplaced ingenuity, must gain our respect. But perhaps the 'hard' astrologer would say that Ptolemy's skill in answering the critics was bought at too high a price. Although he has made it difficult to refute astrology, his disclaimers are so extensive that they seem to make it dispensable.

V SOME LATER DEVELOPMENTS

I must pass over the influence of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in antiquity. The later Neoplatonists took it seriously and commentaries on it were attributed to Porphyry and Proclus.[45] Here I shall confine myself to Plotinus.

Plotinus' attitude towards astrology is complex. As a Platonist, he defends the organic unity of the physical universe, and is quite willing to grant the stars some causal influence on human affairs. Yet such theoretical support as he might appear to lend to astrology does not prevent him from being an acute and strong opponent of its orthodox claims. In his early treatise 'On Destiny' (3.1) he totally rejects the notion that the stars are causes of everything (3.1.5–6), but he does show sympathy for 'soft' astrology (see n.19 above):

We must rather say that the movement of the stars is for the preservation of the universe, but that they perform in addition another service; this is that those who know how to read this sort of writing can, by looking at them as if they were letters, read the future from their patterns, discovering what is signified by the systematic use of analogy. (3.1.6 trans. Armstrong, Loeb edn.)

The method is rather lamely exemplified by the high flight of a bird which might be said to indicate heroism. Having just rejected any decisive role for the stars as causes, Plotinus has hardly prepared us for the cryptographic function which he does concede to them.[46]

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[45] See Boll 1894, 127.

[46] For his critical remarks Plotinus seems to be considerably indebted to the sceptical tradition outlined above; but the first part of 3.1.6 also recalls (though with a different emphasis) Ptolemy,

He returns to the subject more fully in the later essay, 'On whether the stars are causes' (2.3). Here his attack on 'hard' astrology is much more closely integrated with basic doctrines of his own. He again accepts the stars as signs, on the Platonic principle that the parts of the world organism all contribute to the whole (2.3.7). 'They signify everything that happens in the sensible world, but do other things, the things which they are seen to do' (2.3.8). Yet this is not all, for Plotinus. He reminds us of statements from the *Republic* and *Timaeus* concerning Plato's astronomical interpretations of fate and the passions bestowed on the soul by the lesser gods = the heavenly bodies (2.3.9). 'These statements,' he says, 'bind us to the stars, from which we get our souls.' This apparent concession to astrology is equivocal, since only our descended nature is thus affected. The unembodied, transcendent self is not bound up with stellar influences. As for our composite nature, the important thing is to identify the relevant causes. The heavens can contribute to certain human states, e.g. physical strength, a farmer's success, but they are irrelevant to many circumstances, such as inherited wealth, fame, occupation (2.3.14). Overall Plotinus' position seems to be a weakened version of Ptolemaic astrology, but without any commitment to its technical doctrines or interest in horoscopes.

Outside philosophical debate little note was probably taken of Ptolemaic or Plotinian refinements. The measure of Ptolemy's sophistication is clearly seen when we compare his handling of objections to astrology with the efforts of Firmicus Maternus whose eight-book tract called *Mathēsis* was written in the fourth century AD.[47]

Firmicus' work frequently recalls Manilius, but he follows Ptolemy in answering objections to astrology before he expounds the system (1.2). His main lines of defence are a curious combination of deist cosmology and rhetorical adaptation of the objections to his own advantage. Like Ptolemy he acknowledges the difficulty of getting definite results (1.3.2). Yet this does not invalidate the principles of astrology. The science should not be blamed for erroneous horoscopes, whether their cause is the minuteness of the relevant degree of the zodiac, the enormous speed of the stars' orbits and

Tetrab. 1.2, pp. 16–19 Loeb edn. There is no direct evidence that Plotinus read Ptolemy, but nothing in their relative dates excludes this. Lammert 1959, col. 1789, places Ptolemy's life between AD 83 and 161. That he was active between the years 127 and 147 is settled by astronomical observations in the *Syntaxis* and the date of the *Canobic Inscription*, Lammert col. 1788. Thus Ptolemy and Favorinus were more or less direct contemporaries, Favorinus being born in the 80s AD and living on beyond 143, see Schmid 1959, cols. 2079–81.

[47] The standard Latin text is that of Kroll and Skutsch 1897. There is an English trans. by Bram 1975.

the inclination of the heavens, or ignorance in the practitioner. Our bodily constitution makes it difficult for us to acquire knowledge of the divine, but our minds are parts of the divine mind, mediated to us by the stars (1.3.4 and 1.5.11). Since we have been proved capable of discovering the times and orbits of planetary movements, why should it be thought harder for us to define their terrestrial effects? (1.4.11).

Critics object that astrology cannot explain the obvious physical and mental characteristics which a whole nation shares in common (1.2.1). Firmicus (perhaps taking a hint from Ptolemy's introduction) admits that celestial movements as such do not construct the basic physical constitution of human beings; this is due to the mixture of the four elements as organized by divine providence (1.5.6). Still, the stars are responsible for all our secondary characteristics, colours, shapes, customs, and so on. Certainly the critic can fill a theatre with men who are all black Ethiopians; but he must then admit that every one of them is physically distinguishable from his fellows. So the properties of individuals are not reducible to a limited number of ethnic types.

As for its religious and moral consequences, astrology, according to Firmicus, encourages worship of the gods by acknowledging our relationship to the stars (1.6). The critic objects that it undermines morality by making the stars, and not our wills, responsible for virtue and vice.[48] But, Firmicus seems to say, that is how things are: 'nothing is in our power' (1.9.3). Chance is seen to prevail everywhere, as shown by the unjust fortunes of the good and the prospering of the wicked. Serious Stoicism had made an honest attempt to justify the same material within a providential world. But Firmicus, like Manilius before him, sees no apparent problem in combining rationalist theology which makes the human being a divine microcosm with stellar causation which pays no heed to human deserts.

The appeal that astrology could exert is shown by the fact that Augustine dabbled in it as a young man.[49] By the time he came to write the *City of God* he thought otherwise. Astrology is now equally repugnant to him, whether it makes the stars causes of our actions independently of divine will, or treats the stars as divinely mandated to determine human lives, or conceives

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[48] 'Hard' astrology, like determinism of which it is a species, was open to the obvious objection that it negated the freedom of the will, see Favorinus *ap.* Aul. Gell. 14.1.23; Plotinus 3.1.5; Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 5.9.

[49] See Brown 1969, 57 f.

them as simply obeying God's commands (*Civ. Dei* 5.1). Philosophers, he observes, have another way of stating the relevance of the stars' position, treating this not as a cause of human affairs but as a sign. Plotinus is one obvious candidate for Augustine's remarks here. As a thesis, such 'soft' astrology is more acceptable to Augustine; but, he asserts, it has always failed to explain the diversity in the life of twins (ibid.). As we have seen, this problem went right back to the earliest recorded controversies, and Augustine implicitly recognizes this by criticism of Posidonius which he probably found in Cicero, perhaps in missing sections of the *De fato*.[50] Parts of Augustine's argument are already found in Aulus Gellius' summary of Favorinus (14.1.19, 26), and many other objections included in the *City of God* (5.1–7) belong to the same tradition of sceptical criticism.[51] Such antiquarianism, due in part presumably to the sources he used, is characteristic of Augustine's methods as a controversialist. There is no evidence that he took account of Ptolemy's refinements or even knew them. Heredity and environment, causes whose importance Ptolemy admitted (see above p. 143), are the positive weapons Augustine uses to refute astrological explanation of the similarity and differences of twins (5.2).

Augustine has two surprises, though, to remind us that his primary concern is theology. He admits that astrologers often give true predictions, but the explanation of this lies in the power of evil spirits and not the art of horoscopy (5.7). Secondly, he tempers his praise of Cicero's refutation of astrology by accusing him of denying foreknowledge to God: Cicero mistakenly feared that divine foreknowledge would undermine freedom of the will. Even astrology is preferable to a denial of God's foreknowledge (5.9).[52]

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[50] *Civ. Dei* 5.2, 5.5, see above p. 133. Schmekel 1892, 163 ff., makes a good case for Augustine's drawing upon parts of Cicero's *De fato* which are missing from our manuscripts of that work. Less persuasive, to my mind, is his argument that missing parts of the *De fato* rather than the fully extant *De divinatione* were Augustine's principal Ciceronian source for arguments against astrology. His attempt to make astrology as such the object of Cicero's critique in the surviving *De fato* up to section 20 is quite unconvincing, as Yon 1950 has shown, p. xx n. 1.

[51] Further evidence of the persistence of that tradition is seen in Photius' account (cod. 223) of the attack on astrology by one Diodorus of Tarsus (4th century AD). See Schäublin 1980, 51–67, who also finds traces of the influence of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De fato* in Diodorus' work.

[52] *Multo sunt autem tolerabiliores, qui vel siderea fata constituunt, quam iste qui tollit praescientiam futurorum.* Actually Cicero does not explicitly commit himself to this awful heresy in *Div.* or *De fato*. What incensed Augustine, and what he builds upon, are various dialectical arguments in Cicero, such as *Div.* 2.41 where Cicero maintains that the existence of the gods does not entail (contrary to the Stoics) the validity of divination, and his claiming as dubitable the proposition that the gods know the future, ibid. 106.

CONCLUSION

Plato's astral theology and Stoic determinism and pantheism are doctrines which helped to give astrology a theoretical foundation within the Greek philosophical tradition. Some Stoics and some Platonists took astrology seriously, but it was not a subject which mattered greatly even to them up to the time of Plotinus. On the whole the philosophers were hostile, especially Epicureans and sceptics. Astrology is important to later Greek philosophy largely because of the sceptical arguments it provoked. These began in the second century BC with Panaetius, probably under the stimulus of Carneades. Yet astrology seems to have been only a minor item in Carneades' critique of Chrysippus on divination; and even Cicero treats it briefly and rather perfunctorily.

The arguments he records were probably developed before astrology had obtained a secure place in the Graeco-Roman world, but they continued to be repeated by critics up to the time of Augustine. Dialectical rather than technical, they are effective against the primitive versions of astrology which offers itself as a complete explanation of terrestrial events. Astrological writers such as Manilius and Firmicus Maternus made only half-hearted efforts to meet them. Ptolemy went much further in defending astrology against the standard criticism. His disclaimers and modifications (together with the qualified criticism of Plotinus) are perhaps the high points of a protracted debate most parties to which took up entrenched positions.

POSTSCRIPT

Ioppolo 1984 gives a good account of the physical theories that made some Stoics receptive to astrology, once its methodology had been systematically developed. However, notwithstanding her useful treatment of Cicero *De divinatione*, I continue to find the second century BC the more likely period for astrology's strong emergence rather than the third century, as she prefers; see Cambiano 1999, 598–9.

Hankinson 1988 should be consulted on the Stoics' incorporation of divination within their science. In discussing Stoic approaches to astrology, he distinguishes (pp. 132–5) between 'strong' astrology, by which he refers to 'concrete predictions for particular individuals', and 'weak astrology which deals in general tendencies and predispositions'. According to this distinction,

Diogenes of Babylon (this volume, p. 131) espoused only weak astrology. I agree with Hankinson that Carneades' arguments, as reflected in Cicero and Sextus, are directed against 'strong' astrology. Readers should note that the distinction I make (n. 19 above) between 'strong' and 'weak' astrology is not the same as Hankinson's identical terminology.

For a fine edition of Sextus *M* 5 (*Against the Astrologers*) see Spinelli 2000.

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PART III

EPICUREANISM

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Chance and laws of nature in Epicureanism

When Epicurus discharged the gods from running the world, he gave new fuel to a controversy which had been raging off and on for the past hundred years, and which would continue not only through the Hellenistic and early Christian centuries but even up to the present day, as twenty-first-century evolutionists lock horns with proponents of Intelligent Design. In nominating atoms and void as the basic principles of natural phenomena, Epicurus knew perfectly well that he was entering an arena where Plato and Aristotle had already done battle against the mechanistic explanations of earlier thinkers. [1] How could a purely mechanical combination of atoms moving in empty space account for the regular movements of the heavenly bodies and the orderly structure of living things? Plato and Aristotle had inferred divine causation for the world and inherent purposiveness from the evidence of such regularities, and within Epicurus' own lifetime the Stoics took up the same fundamental position as the Academy and the Peripatos.[2] By the time of Lucretius and Cicero we may speak of a generalized deistic standpoint which

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The Fondation Hardt offered me ideal conditions for writing the first draft of this chapter.

  [1] Some of the classic texts are Plato, *Phd.* 98b (Socrates' disappointment with Anaxagoras), *Laws* 10, 889b–d (those who deny that mind, god, and craft have any part in causing the world), and Aristotle, *Phys.* 2.7, 198b14–199a8 (criticism of Empedocles and Anaxagoras for their neglect of the final cause). At *Phys.* 2.4, 196a24–35 Aristotle challenges those who say that spontaneity (*to automaton*) is the cause of the heaven and all worlds to reconcile this doctrine with their claim that animals and plants do not arise 'from chance, but have nature or mind or another such thing as their cause'. Scholars generally follow Simplicius (*In phys.* 331, 16 ff.) in identifying Aristotle's target here as Atomists. For Aristotle, an unpurposed result is 'from chance' (ἀπὸ τύχης) but that does not imply its lack of a determinate cause; cf. Cherniss 1935, 248–9. In discussing the Atomists, including Epicurus, it is essential to distinguish this sense of chance from mere contingency or sheer indeterminism.

  [2] Besides the texts cited in n. 1, see Plato, *Laws* 7, 821a ff., Aristotle, *GC* 2.10, 336b25–337a1, and Furley 1966, 29–30. The Stoic view is stated in Cicero, *ND* 2.93 ff., which refers to the 'incredibility' of the Atomist position and also quotes against it a passage from Aristotle's lost *De philosophia*. Marcus Aurelius expresses the choice between the divergent views as 'either providence or atoms' (*Med.* 4.3, 9.28, 10.6).

confronts and is confronted by Epicureanism. 'You [Stoics]', says Cicero's Epicurean spokesman (*ND* 1.53), 'fail to see how nature's creative work can occur without any mind (*sine aliqua mente*), and so you run to god like the tragic poets, needing a god to unravel the end of your plot.'

Epicurus thought he could undermine deistic and teleological explanations of the world by reducing all inanimate phenomena to matter in motion. How effectively did he do so? Not well at all, according to Solmsen (1951, 18–19):

Granted that Epicurus condemned the conclusions which men had drawn from the pattern of order in the firmament, could he deny or ignore the regularities? Why does the sun rise every day *tempore certo* . . . On the basis of the atomist theory it was desperately difficult to cope with these problems and one can hardly maintain that Epicurus acquitted himself of his task in a manner likely to enhance his stature as a scientist.

Solmsen is 'tempted to comment' that Epicureanism was unable 'to cope with the phenomena which the Academy ascribed to the operations of a divine Mind or Soul'. This is a very serious charge; for it implies that Epicureanism failed to defend itself at the very points where it issued its strongest challenge.

Somewhat hesitantly, Solmsen went on to qualify his criticism by drawing attention to the way Lucretius repeatedly argues that every new phenomenon arises out of something determinate (*certum*).[3] Here, in the notion of determinacy, we begin to glimpse the makings of a strong Epicurean response to their deistic opponents. Further help to their case was delivered by De Lacy (1969). In an important study, he showed that the concept of 'limit' functions as a unifying theme throughout Epicurean philosophy, and how, in particular, it sets constraints on the variations possible within members of a given species. De Lacy recognized that Epicureanism envisioned an approximation to what we would call laws of nature, but this proves to be quite a weak notion, in his account, and compatible with a high degree of indeterminacy, in consequence of the totally spontaneous and unpredictable 'swerve' of atoms. It is the swerve, according to De Lacy, that is responsible for variations within limits, such as the fact that a child sometimes resembles the mother, sometimes the father, and sometimes even a grandparent (Lucret. 4.1209–32).[4]

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[3] 1.159–214, etc. As Solmsen observes, Lucretius' proof of this thesis goes beyond his context's official demonstrandum—*nil de nilo gigni*. To show that any new item must arise out of something pre-existent, it is not necessary to show that its source is something generically similar or even determinate (*certum*).

[4] De Lacy 1969, 109. In his discussion of the sources of inherited characteristics, Lucretius explains that offspring may resemble a grandfather or a remoter ancestor because their own fathers

The swerve of atoms, by definition, is the beginning of a new movement at no determinate time and place (Lucret. 2.218–19). It breaks any sequence of antecedent causes (2.251–5). If Epicurus and Lucretius supposed that the manifold varieties within the members of a species were due to the swerve of atoms, they endowed their system with a degree of indeterminacy that would have made it appallingly vulnerable to attack by their deistic opponents. Critics of Epicureanism fastened upon the atomic swerve, but they are not attested to have attacked it on the grounds of its being an arbitrary cause of natural events.[5] De Lacy, however, is not alone in assuming that Epicurus accepted into his explanation of phenomena an element of sheer contingency and indeterminacy. This has been a widely held and influential view during the past hundred years or so.[6]

Prior to that, however, scholars generally supposed that human action was the only sphere within our world which Epicurus credited with indeterminacy or spontaneous motion. The human sphere thus constituted a significant exception to the causal continuity evident in all other phenomena. To account for human freedom of action, the Epicureans instanced the mind's capacity to initiate new beginnings of motion, and they included, in their explanation of this capacity, the mind atoms' potentiality to make minimal deviations from their antecedent trajectories.[7] They also invoked the swerve to explain how atoms falling in the void might deviate from their perpendicular trajectories and thereby make the contact with one another requisite to constituting a world. These are the only two functions of the swerve that Lucretius reports, and no word about it from Epicurus himself has yet been discovered.

pass on to them conglomerates of atoms that they in turn have received from their fathers. He then (reading *minus* at 4.1225, see Smith 1975 *ad loc.*) says: 'From these Venus brings forth forms with varying lot (*varia sorte*) and reproduces the look, voice, and hair of ancestors; because these things come from a determinate seed (*semine certo*) *no less* than our faces and bodies and limbs.' De Lacy, like Bailey 1947, reads *magis* at 4.1225, which credits Lucretius with the absurd idea that nothing in heredity has a determinate source. With *minus* as the certainly correct reading, there is no possible role for the atomic swerve to play here.

[5] The standard objection to the swerve is that it introduces an inexplicable form of spontaneous motion in order to account for human freedom of action (see Lucret. 2.251–93 and the passages collected in Usener 281).

[6] Cf. Bailey 1928, 326: 'There can hardly be any doubt that Epicurus admitted the existence of a real contingency in nature, an element of "chance", which at times worked in contravention of necessity.'

[7] How the random swerve was supposed to contribute to free volitions is a question that has received an immense amount of largely inconclusive debate. For the purpose of this paper, all that matters is that the Epicureans assigned it *some* role in that context. For recent discussion, see Hankinson 1999, Everson 1999, and Fowler 2002.

The first scholar to propose a much more extensive function for the swerve was Guyau. In his book *La Morale d' Epicure*, first published in 1879, Guyau (1910, 72–102) argued that Epicurus extended the function of the swerve beyond the human sphere to cover spontaneous happenings within the natural world as fully formed. This proposal did not gain much support at first.[8] But, as we have seen, it appealed to De Lacy, and it also recurs in Bailey (1947) and Rist (1972, 52), who writes: 'There is a random element, an element of chance in nature, and Guyau was probably right in holding that Epicurus attributed it to the swerve of atoms.'[9] The first question of this study is whether Epicurus did envision a random or chance element in nature. If the answer to that question is negative, as I shall argue, there is no reason to give the swerve a larger role than that explicitly accorded it by Lucretius.

EPICURUS AND LUCRETIUS ON CHANCE

In discussing this issue, we need to be very clear about what we are asking. Random or chance in English, and τύχη or μάτην in Greek, may mean that the event or thing that they qualify is aimless, not something purposive or goal-directed. This seems to have been Democritus' conception of the physical world. Hence he did not contradict himself if he also thought that all events are the necessary outcome of antecedent causes. Random or chance in the sense of aimless is quite compatible with necessary. Because Epicurus strenuously resisted the idea that the world is the outcome of any design or serves any end, he too could attribute the world to chance in that sense of the word. But this cannot be the point envisaged by those who account for random and chance events by invoking the swerve. Epicurus had no need for an exceptional type of atomic movement to account for aimlessness in his conception of nature. In fact, the one phenomenon to which the swerve does make a definite contribution is the purposeful movements of living beings.[10] Natural events in general *are* aimless, according to him, and therefore require

[8] See Zeller 1909, n. 5, 421–2, and Hicks 1910, 260–1. For the same view in more recent authors see De Witt 1954, 175, and Farrington 1967, 8.

[9] Bailey 1928, 324–6, was sceptical about Guyau's link between 'contingency in organic nature' and the swerve, but much later he found the idea 'probably right'; see Bailey 1947, vol. 2, p. 840. What seems to have resolved his earlier doubts is Philodemus, *On signs* col. 36, 11–17. I discuss this passage at n. 41 below.

[10] Lucretius (2.256–7) refers to the *libera voluntas* of 'living beings all over the earth', then writes of the way 'we' move where our pleasure takes us, and then gives the behaviour of horses as an illustration. Because I am not concerned in this study with the scope or analysis of his conception of 'free will', I shall write in future as if it pertains just to human beings.

no special freedom from normal atomic motion in order to be explained. (I shall develop this point in the later part of my study.)

To return to the meanings of random and chance, only if these words are used in a quite other sense or series of senses would there be point in attributing random or chance events to the swerve. The relevant senses are contingency as distinct from necessity, indeterminacy as distinct from determinateness, and spontaneity as distinct from causal continuity. If Epicurus supposed that some natural events exhibit these properties, that circumstance might, in principle, be attributable to the swerve provided that the events in question, like the swerve, involve things that happen at no determinate time and place. Irregularity or disorderliness, on the other hand, are senses of random and chance, which, like aimlessness, imply no contradiction of causation or necessity.

I shall now consider the evidence that persuaded Bailey and others to think that Epicurus admitted 'real contingency', or pure indeterminacy, alongside necessity in his explanation of natural events. Much is at stake here, because a combination of necessity and real contingency is incoherent unless the limits of supposedly indeterminate happenings are clearly specifiable. De Lacy (1969, 113) concludes his study by stating that 'Epicurus [does not] tell us where the limits are', and neither Bailey nor Rist raises the problem, glaring though it would be if it were actual. If instead Epicurus supposed that continuity of causation and predictability, in principle, characterize all types of observable happenings except for human (or other animal) behaviour, and that only in this exceptional case does the atomic swerve enter into the explanation of events, his scientific credit would not be impugned.

Chance (*tychē*) occurs several times in the surviving work of Epicurus, generally in ethical maxims that can tell us nothing about any technical use he might have had for the concept in his theorizing about nature. His *Letter to Menoeceus* also treats of ethics, but it concludes with a passage (133–4) which has been thought to imply that he took chance to be a causal power in nature.[11]

Epicurus has just identified practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) as the fundamental requirement for living the pleasurable life. He then describes the person who has this virtue. Among other things, such an individual 'laughs at the *fate* (*heimarmenē*) whom some bring in as the master of everything'. At this point the text becomes defective for a line or so, but it is clear from the way it resumes that Epicurus described the attitude that his wise paragon adopts to things that occur

[11] See Bailey 1928, 325–6 and Rist 1972, 51–2.

'due to necessity (*anangkē*), or chance, or what is up to us', respectively. He takes necessity to be 'unaccountable, chance to be unstable (*astatos*), and "what is up to us", with which praise and blame are naturally associated, to be free from any master'. Epicurus then adds the following parenthetical comment, by way of justifying his wise person's attitude: 'It is better to endorse the myths about the gods than to be enslaved to the "fate" of the natural philosophers.' Having disposed of necessity or fate, Epicurus elaborates on the appropriate attitude to chance. His wise person 'does not regard it as a god, as many do . . . nor as a haphazard cause (*abebaios aitia*); for he does not think that it is the source to human beings of benefit or harm for living a blessed life, but that it furnishes starting points for great benefits or harms'.[12]

This is the nearest we come to getting a definition of chance from Epicurus. If chance, as he says, is not 'a haphazard cause', it can hardly be a genuine cause at all; for the converse of haphazard would be 'regular', and that would be a nonsensical attribute of chance.[13] What Epicurus refers to here is surely not 'a random element in nature' (so Rist 1972, 52) but the common-or-garden luck or uncertainty characteristic of human life. Just like Aristotle, he grants the fact that luck influences a person's opportunities for happiness, but, again like Aristotle, he makes good reasoning the decisive factor.[14]

Bailey (1928, 325–6) acknowledged that he needed stronger evidence than this passage in order to establish his case that Epicurus 'appears to regard chance as the intervention of an unaccountable force which to some extent thwarts natural law'. However, the few passages 'in the physical theory' that he cites do not support this view.

In the *Letter to Pythocles* (89) Epicurus specifies the conditions that must be fulfilled if a new world is to come into being. First, a region of largely (not completely) void space is required. Second, 'suitable seeds (σπέρματα ἐπιτήδεια) rush from a single world or interworld or from several worlds, and gradually make additions and articulations and changes of position, as it may happen (ἐὰν οὕτω τύχῃ), and cause irrigations from the suitable sources up to the stage of completion and persistence, to the extent that the underlying foundations can continue to admit them'. Bailey takes the words ἐὰν οὕτω τύχῃ to signify

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[12] I follow the text of von der Muehll 1922.

[13] Yet, some editors have emended *abebaios* to *bebaios*, yielding the completely banal thought that the wise person does not regard chance as a 'regular cause'.

[14] Cf. *KD* 16 for a contrast between the minor contributions of τύχη and the decisive role of λογισμός. For Aristotle see *EN* 1.8, 1099a30–b8. In both contexts the 'contributions' of chance are expressed in similar language, χορηγεῖσθαι in Epicurus and the need for the happy person not to be ἀχορήγητος in Aristotle.

an element of chance working in contravention of necessity. In fact the phrase is a familiar Greek expression that simply means 'as it may happen'.[15] What it contributes to Epicurus' elaborate sentence is not an importation of 'real contingency in nature', but an acknowledgement of the possible outcomes when the basic constituents that can form worlds engage in causal contact with one another.

In much the same way, Lucretius (2.1059–62) describes the 'beginnings of great things' (*magnarum rerum exordia*), that is, the sources of worlds, being formed by atoms which unite together after they have jostled one another *sponte sua, forte, incassum, frustraque*. The impressive group of adverbs emphasizes the aimlessness of the contact between atoms that may generate the 'seeds' of a world. If a world results from such contact, that is a chance, in the sense of a purposeless or unintended, outcome. It may be that some of the atoms that actually generate such materials came together by swerving 'of their own accord', rather than under the influence of an antecedent succession of causes. But even if Lucretius refers to spontaneous as well as aimless atomic movements in his pre-cosmic context, it does not follow that in the macroscopic world of complex bodies—the world as we experience it—he makes room for Bailey's 'real contingency' to operate in any ways that could disrupt the observable regularities of nature.

Two further Lucretian contexts that he cites need not detain us long. When Lucretius prays that 'fortune the pilot' (*fortuna gubernans*) may delay our world's inevitable end (5.107), his words are no more to be taken literally than when he describes Venus as the sole governor of nature (1.21). We must allow Lucretius the poetic licence to use some traditional language. Nor should we take him to be writing with scientific exactitude in the introduction to book 6 (30–1), where he refers to troubles that occur in various ways 'whether by natural chance or force' (*naturali . . . seu casu seu vi*). The context of this passage is Epicurean therapy for anxiety and fear. Bailey (1947, *ad loc.*) writes: 'these pains are due to the action of nature, but they may be caused either by chance (e.g. accidents or disease) or by necessity (e.g. old age, death).' Then, quite strangely, Bailey repeats his mantra about the operative power of chance in nature, as if the Epicureans would have regarded accidents or disease as spontaneous happenings that are exempt from universal causation.[16]

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[15] Cf. Plato, *Crat.* 430e and Aristotle, *Cat.* 7, 8b 12.

[16] Sallmann 1962, 50, who finds no evidence that chance is a constituent of nature in Lucretius, effectively dismisses the supposition that this passage contains a contrast between causation and something else, or that it has anything to do with the swerve.

In addition to this meage haul of material from Epicurus and Lucretius, we need to review a comment by Plutarch which, at first glance, looks more promising for the 'element of chance in nature' proposal.[17] Plutarch refers to critics of Epicurus who do not allow him a minute swerve of a single atom 'in order that stars and animals *and chance* (καὶ τύχη) might slip in and human autonomy not be destroyed'. The curious pairing of stars and animals is almost certainly due to its picking out the prime exhibits of Epicurus' deistic and teleological opponents.[18] Their position is that astronomical and biological phenomena are too systematic and well structured to be explained as the effects of chance, meaning absence of aim or design. But the text, as transmitted, rather than making this obvious point, conceals it by treating chance as a constituent of the world that Epicurus sought to introduce by recourse to the swerve. Many scholars have questioned the words καὶ τύχη, and suggested emendations. The best of these emendations would yield the following sense: 'in order that stars and animals might slip in by chance and human autonomy not be destroyed.'[19]

With this emendation, Plutarch's text ties in beautifully with Lucretius' treatment of the atomic swerve. There this unpredictable motion is inferred not from casual happenings in our world but from the existence of *libera voluntas* in living beings and from the postulate that atoms must be liable to swerve in order to make the contact with one another requisite to world formation. The swerve of an atom enables a world and its living inhabitants to get under way *by chance*—not meaning that a world has no determinate causal history or that it springs out of nowhere, but that its occurrence has nothing to do with any aim, design, or divine intention.

I have now reviewed the main texts from which scholars have concluded that Epicurus admitted chance as a quasi-physical force operative in the world. The next step in the argument will bring us to the positive ingredients of

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[17] *De sollertia animalium* 964C (Usener 351, 11). This is Rist's trump card for attributing chance in nature to the swerve (Rist 1972, 52), though Bailey (1928, 327) found it standing 'absolutely alone' and not even hinted at in Lucretius' treatment of the swerve.

[18] So Sandbach 1941, who compares these anti-Epicurean remarks of Lactantius (*Inst. div.* 3.17.16 = Usener 370): 'If there is no providence, how is it that the world has arisen with such order and organization? . . . How is it that animals' bodies are so providentially organized? . . . They are not, he says, the work of providence; for there are seeds flying through the void from whose random agglomeration worlds are generated.'

[19] Reading κατὰ τύχην or τύχη with Sandbach 1941, 114. Helmbold in the Loeb edition of Plutarch's *Moralia* XII adopts the former of these emendations. See also Fowler 2002, 308.

Epicurean cosmology without teleology, focusing especially on Lucretius' massive emphasis on the 'laws' of nature. Before that, however, I need to address the question of what Epicurus meant by his strong rejection of the natural philosophers' 'fate'; for, by opposing the idea that Epicurus admitted chance as an operative cause in nature, I may have given the impression that I take him to have been a tacit determinist in regard to all phenomena apart from human agency.

The natural philosophers' 'fate' is almost certainly a critical allusion to Democritus, signifying that Epicurus thought the theories of his atomic predecessors undermined the basis for free will and moral judgement. It is unlikely that Democritus explicitly anticipated the Stoics by proposing that the sequence of all events is rigidly fixed for all time, but he may have supposed that everything that happens in the world now, including especially human thoughts and actions, is necessitated by previous motions of atoms.[20] We can be sure, in any case, that it was primarily the need to resist such necessity that prompted Epicurus to introduce the unpredictable swerve as a possible cause of atoms' motion over and above their primary causes—their weight and billiard-ball-like impact on one another.[21]

Given the fact that any atom has the potentiality to swerve from its previous trajectory at no determinate time and place, Epicurus was not entitled to specify any limitations on when and where this may occur. One of his atoms may at this instant be swerving in outer space, or within a block of stone, or within your or my mind. By definition, this can happen unpredictably, anywhere and at any time. However, the swerve is 'no more than the minimum' (*nec plus quam minimum*, probably meaning that the deviation from its previous trajectory is the smallest possible interval of space) and it does not conflict with the fact that all observable motion is linear.[22]

My suggestion is that, although theoretically Epicurus has to allow the possibility of chance events in virtue of the swerve, since the basis for this

[20] See Bailey 1928, 318, and Furley 1967, 175, who doubts if Democritus was 'really a "fatalist" in any recognizable sense', but admits that Epicurus 'may have thought that fatalism followed from Democritus' physical theories'.

[21] I am not forgetting the argument of Lucretius, that without the swerve free-falling atoms in the void would never meet. But the focus of our sources is so strongly on Epicurus' resistance to 'fate', in the context of human action, that this was almost certainly the context in which he first elaborated the theory; see LS vol. 1, pp. 52, and 102–4.

[22] Lucret. 2.244–50. For theories of whether the swerve involves a diagonal or a sideways shift from the atom's previous trajectory, see Fowler 2002, 304–5.

indeterminism falls well below the threshold of perception, it is quite compatible with the operation of physical laws and determinate motions caused by weight and impact at the macroscopic or observable level. He could maintain, with much plausibility, that because the soul, as he understands it, is composed of the finest and most mobile of all structures, it is only in this exceptional case that the minimal swerve of a single atom disrupts the 'bonds of fate' (Lucret. 2.254) to the extent of facilitating an observable event—voluntary action—that is not predictable and determined by antecedent causes.[23] In his account of phenomena Epicurus was concerned not with the motions of individual atoms, but with the motions of aggregates, severally composed of vast numbers of atoms intermixed with void. He probably supposed that the swerve of one or more atoms in a denser and less mobile structure than the soul has too little power to modify the conditions imposed by the shape, weight, and motions of the total mass of component atoms, or, at least, too little power to be registered as a strictly 'chance' event at the phenomenal level.

In that case we can find a rough analogy to Epicurus' position in the relation of both relativity theory and quantum mechanics to classical physics. Newton's conceptions of absolute space and time, and his determininistic laws of motion, 'work wonderfully well at the slow speeds and moderate gravity we encounter in daily life'.[24] It is only when we are dealing with the world at the level of elementary particles—'the realm of the extremely tiny'—that quantum uncertainty tells us that 'the attributes our classical intuition ascribes to reality' concerning the positions and velocities of things is misguided. Obviously Epicurus had no inkling of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle or of the probabilistic reasoning that enables modern physicists to reconcile their findings about the strange behaviour of elementary particles, under laboratory conditions, with the predictable order evident in everyday reality. The analogy is useful just to the extent that it provides an actual instance of the position that Epicurus needs—an indeterministic world at the micro-level, whose uncertainties are too insignificant at the macro-level to call in question the observable evidence for predictable regularities.

If, as I suggest, the human mind is the one realm within our world to which this indeterminism pertains in any important philosophical sense, Epicurus

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[23] Cf. Epicurus, *Ep. Hdt.* 63 (σῶμα λεπτομερές); Lucret. 3.179–80 (*persubtilem atque minutis perquam corporibus factum*), 204 (*mobilis egregie*), 209 (*quam tenui constet textura*). The soul's *nameless* element, which gives it its specific character, is described as *qua neque mobilius quicquam neque tenuius extat, nec magis e parvis et levibus ex elementis* (243–4).

[24] I draw on the splendidly lucid book of Greene 2005, esp. 77–8, 99.

has a strong response to offer to the criticism that he failed to provide criteria for distinguishing between things that are determinate and those that are not.

THE EPICUREAN EXPLANATION FOR OBSERVABLE REGULARITIES

Epicurus found it a useful educational device to encapsulate his philosophy in a set of elementary propositions or axioms (*stoicheiōmata*, *Ep. Hdt.* 36). A scholium to section 44 of his *Letter to Herodotus*, which outlines the fundamental doctrines of Epicurean physics, refers to a lost work entitled *The twelve stoicheiōseis*. Clay (1973) has identified these elementary propositions with material found in the *Letter* (38, line 8–44, line 1; 54, lines 3–6) and in the first two *Kuriai doxai*, all of which recurs in Lucretius.[25] Clay's list constitutes a collection of what we may call laws of nature or necessary principles. Conspicuous among them are the first—'Nothing comes into being out of nothing', and the second—'Nothing passes away into nothing'. Limit, and unlimited or infinite, are two fundamental concepts present in some of these propositions: for instance, 'The universe is unlimited'; for it contains an infinite number of atomic bodies and infinite void. 'The number of atoms of similar shapes is infinite', but 'The number of atomic shapes, though incomprehensively numerous, is not infinite'.

  The truth of these propositions, largely justified by empirical arguments, underwrites the foundations of Epicurus' strictly mechanistic and aimless account of our world and any of the infinite number of other worlds. To account for the variety and range of phenomena, Epicurus inferred that no world could ever run short of atoms appropriate to constitute its macroscopic bodies (*Ep. Hdt.* 45). These bodies, however, are too constant in their phenomenal properties to suggest that their atomic constituents have no limit to their possible shapes (*ibid.* 42, Lucret. 2.478–521). Moreover, the number of atoms which constitutes our world at any moment must be limited.

  Lucretius trades very heavily on the concept of limit in his explanations of natural regularities. Epicurus is less explicit in his surviving words, and he

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[25] See also Clay 1983, 60–3. Clay 1973, 271, finds it odd that these elementary propositions make no reference to the swerve. Quite possibly Epicurus had not developed that doctrine at the time when he wrote the *Letter to Herodotus*. Yet, even if he had done so, the swerve, by its very uncertainty, would hardly merit a place in a set of statements classifying necessary principles.

never personifies nature, as Lucretius loves to do. For historical reasons that I discuss elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 10), Lucretius made defence of Epicureanism against the deists' criticism central to the themes of his *De rerum natura*. Epicurus himself does not appear to have done so or seen the need to do so. However, before turning to Lucretius, we should see what Epicurus said by way of anticipating or encouraging his poetic successor's recourse to the idea of nature's laws or bonds (*foedera naturae*).

In his *Letter to Pythocles* (88–9) Epicurus describes a world as 'a particular encompassment of a heaven, encompassing astronomical bodies and earth and all the phenomena. It is cut off from the infinite, and terminates in a limit.' By limit (*peras*) Epicurus refers to the circumference of a world. The structure and shape of this circumference may vary, he observes. What is absolutely invariant is any world's need for a boundary to encompass its macroscopic bodies. Not only is a world a limited structure in terms of its shape and location and duration. It is also limited, as we have seen (p. 162), by the type of material requisite to its formation. A world does not arise simply from any sufficiently large confluence of individual atoms, but from 'suitable seeds', and these presuppose determinate combinations of atoms with specific shapes and capacities for interaction.[26]

In this part of his account, Epicurus goes out of his way to criticize Democritus.[27] 'It is not sufficient for an aggregation (*athroismos*) or a vortex to occur in the empty space where a world can arise, as is supposed, from necessity.' The context shows that Epicurus' objection to Democritus was not only the latter's supposedly simplistic invocation of necessity, but also his neglect to limit the requisite aggregations to 'suitable seeds' and the structures these produce by the 'additions and articulations and transpositions that they cause'. This focus on suitability should not be interpreted as an incautious lapse into teleology, but an acknowledgement of what Aristotle (*Phys.* 2.9) calls 'conditional necessity', as in the case of the materials necessary if there is to be a wall.

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[26] On the seeds, see Bailey 1928, 343–4. In Lucretius individual atoms may be called seeds (*semina rerum*) or 'creative bodies' (*genitalia corpora*), as well as aggregates of atoms (see 1.58–62), but I take Epicurus to restrict the term to the latter. Kerferd 1971, 89, criticizes modern attempts to find a more technical word for the seeds or aggregates, but thinks Epicurus must have had a 'doctrine' of molecules.

[27] Not by name. But Democritus must be the referent of 'the so-called natural philosopher' Epicurus criticizes. See above, p. 162, on the natural philosophers' fate.

By his use of the seed metaphor, Epicurus helped himself to a biological model of cosmic evolution and destruction.[28] We are his heirs in this respect because we continue to talk about the birth and death of celestial bodies, the waxing and waning of the moon, and the growth and decline of terrestrial phenomena, such as volcanoes, glaciers, and so forth. It is an obvious, perhaps an unavoidable, way for human beings to make sense of natural phenomena. In the case of Epicurus, who was so committed to removing any traces of animism or divinity from nature, we may regard it as a quite deliberate acknowledgement of the fact that lifeless and living phenomena are completely alike in their basic material constituents and possession of determinate properties such as colour, smell, and so on. The building-blocks of the world are not biological seeds, but they function, just like the latter, as creative agents of specific natural kinds. Hence the biological model actually proves to be an effective weapon in the service of defending cosmology without teleology.

Can we say more about the 'suitable seeds'? Epicurus rejected the now well-entrenched theory of four elements, seemingly because he found it tainted with a priori essentialism.[29] He replaced it, so I think, with a restricted set of atomic aggregates (*synkriseis*). Rather than naming these as specific elementary substances (fire, earth, etc.), he wisely preferred, in line with his empiricism, to say no more about the material structures underlying phenomena than immediate observation warranted. For a good example of this procedure, I take his brief treatment of astronomy (*Ep. Hdt.* 76–7).

Like the deists, Epicurus accepted the regularity of celestial phenomena, but he completely rejected their explanation of it in terms of divine control and dispensation. Such a belief conflicted with his conception of blissfully carefree deities, and he deemed it equally mistaken to credit the heavenly bodies themselves with divinity and intentionality. The heavenly bodies are simply what we see them to be—'agglomerations of fire'. How, then, is their 'necessary periodicity' to be explained? We must suppose that it is due to the 'original inclusion of *these agglomerations* (τῶν συστροφῶν τούτων) at the birth of the world'. The italicized words pick up the previous description of the heavenly bodies. Epicurus is hardly saying that the heavenly bodies as such

[28] See Solmsen 1953.
[29] Sextus Emp. *M* 8, 336; for his criticism of Plato's five geometrical solids, see Arrighetti 1973, 263–7 and Clay 1983, 156–8. For Lucretius' arguments against Empedocles' elements, see 1.716–829.

were fully formed at the very beginning of the world. His point is rather that the fiery particles ('these agglomerations') from which they were fashioned and developed were a constituent of the world from its onset.[30]

The interest of this proposal is its explanation of the most conspicuous of all regular phenomena—celestial motions—by reference to the material conditions that obtained at the origin of the world. It encourages us to suppose that Epicurus took the initial supply and structure of the world's matter, in the sense of 'suitable seeds', to be sufficiently constant and predictable to underwrite laws of nature, internal to the world in their operation. Such laws would have to be compatible with his doctrine that the world has its cycle of growth, stability, and decay. They would not signify physical necessities applicable in every detail to every possible world, but they would be sufficiently deterministic to give our world the coherence and stability that we observe it to have.

If the surviving words of Epicurus do not allow us to give his explicit endorsement to this proposal, we can call on numerous passages in Lucretius for confirmation. I take first the lines (2.294–307) that immediately follow his proof of the atom's potentiality to swerve:

The supply of matter was never more packed [than it is now] nor again set at greater intervals; for nothing causes it to grow and nothing perishes from it. Therefore the bodies of the first-beginnings are in the same motion now that they were in at former times, and after this they will always travel in the same way. And the things that are accustomed to be born will be born under the same conditions; and will exist and grow and be as strong as each thing is granted to be by the laws of nature (*per foedera naturai*).

This statement of the invariance of matter and motion throughout the universe is an amplification of one of Epicurus' elementary propositions (*Ep. Hdt.* 39). What Lucretius grafts on to it is the last sentence of my extract—the proposition that genesis within the universe, that is, within worlds, is constant in its causal conditions. This very forceful insistence on such regularity is particularly striking because of Lucretius' context. He has just argued that the swerve permits living beings to initiate movements that break 'the bonds of fate' (*fati foedera*, 2.254), and that it 'tears free will away from fate' (2.257). It can be no accident that Lucretius stresses the uniformity of cosmic motion (*motus idem*) immediately following his account of free will and the unpredictable and spontaneous swerves on which it depends.[31] His words

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[30] *Ep. Pyth.* 90.   [31] See Müller 1959, 31.

in the extract above, especially *motus idem*, and the control exerted by *foedera naturae*, advise us to expect nothing analogous to irregular motion and free will in the world at large.

Lucretius is so strongly committed to the determinate order of nature that he makes it the premise of the following *modus tollens* argument, in proving the immutability of atoms (1.584–98): If the primary bodies were not immutable, the order of nature would be uncertain. But the order of nature is completely certain. Therefore the primary bodies are immutable. I translate the whole passage because it exhibits characteristic language and thought that Lucretius brings to bear when registering his belief in the fixed orders of species.

Since things have a limit (*finis*) placed on their growth and life-span according to their species, and since what each can and cannot do is ratified (*sancitum*) by the laws of nature (*per foedera naturai*), and since nothing changes but everything is so constant that all the varieties of birds display from generation to generation on their bodies the markings of their species, they naturally must also have a body composed of immutable matter. For if the first-beginnings of things could be overcome in any way and changed, what could and could not arise would also be uncertain—that is to say, by what rationale each thing has its power limited (*finita*) and its deeply set boundary (*alte terminus haerens*)—and subsequent generations could not so often repeat the nature, character, behaviour, and movements of their parents.

The term *foedus* runs through the great didactic poem like a leitmotif, most strikingly as here in explicit association with *natura*, but also in contexts where that association is implied.[32] Lucretius uses it when he has his mind's eye on the regularity of species and the limits of change (cf. 2.302 and 5.57). In particular, he appeals to nature's *foedera* to reject the belief that there could ever have been hybrid creatures such as Centaurs (5.923–4). Although the earth contained numerous 'seeds' at the time when living beings first developed, hybrids were and are impossible: 'Each thing proceeds in its own way, and all maintain their differences by nature's determinate law' (*foedere naturae certo*).

A *foedus*, as its etymological connection with *fidus* shows, is something reliable, sure, trustworthy. Hence in Roman authors it is found most frequently in social contexts where the subject is a formal agreement, such as a treaty, or contract, or marriage. The term naturally brings to mind such concepts as ratification (see *sancitum* above) and especially law, with which Lucretius connects it when he states his intention of 'setting forth the *foedus* by which

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[32] 1.586, 2.302, 3.416, 5.57, 310, 924, 6.906.

all things are created, and how they are *necessitated* to stick to it and unable to rescind the firm laws of their duration' (*validas aevi leges*, 5.56–8). It is easy to see that *foedus*, given its etymology and societal connotations, belongs within the semantic field of the Latin equivalents of words like boundary, terminus, limit, order, and certitude. And so it is with Lucretius in his usage of *finis*, *terminus*, *ordo*, *certus*, and so forth.

Given all this, we need have no hesitation in translating *foedera naturae* by 'laws of nature', or *foedus* on its own as 'law', when Lucretius writes of the *foedus* by which mind and spirit are for ever bound together (3.416).[33] What we should pause to reflect on is Lucretius' linguistic originality (for so it appears to be) in formulating an expression for 'laws of nature'. It is virtually certain that no Roman had said this before, or at least said it with reference to Lucretius' conception of determinate causation at work in physical processes.[34] It is highly probable that no Greek had explicitly invoked law as a metaphor for the regularity or necessity of nature.[35] This is not to say, of course, that thinkers before Lucretius had no inkling of what we today call laws of nature. I presume that, as the faithful expositor of Epicurus, he took himself to be articulating his master's own scientific insights. According to what I have already argued in this chapter, he was an entirely faithful expositor of the spirit of Epicurus' teaching. It remains true, however, that Epicurus offers us no expression sufficiently similar to Lucretius' *foedera naturae* to have inspired the poet-philosopher's language.

One factor that no doubt influenced Lucretius was the distinctly Roman tendency to represent order and regularity by reference to law. But we need more than that to explain why Lucretius was so much more insistent than Epicurus on systematic causation in his account of natural events. In the tenth chapter of this volume I seek the answer to that question in challenges later Epicureans were facing from Stoics concerning their completely godless and purposeless cosmology. In this light Lucretius' focus on the 'laws of nature' is best interpreted as a brilliant riposte to the Stoics, showing that, what the

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[33] Reich 1958, 125, prefers to translate *foedus* by 'bond' (*Bündnis*) rather than 'law' (*Gesetz*), in the belief that Lucretius has in mind the basic aggregates that Epicurus calls *synkriseis*. Clearly, Lucretius' *foedera* are grounded in such physical structures but, rather than particular aggregates, we should take them to identify the causality of all aggregates of a given type, along the lines—same aggregate, same effect.

[34] See Fowler 2002, 381. Cicero, *Pro Scauro* 5 refers to something's being *contra foedus legemque naturae*, but his context is not scientific, and it is also possible that he has been influenced by reading Lucretius, as Virgil clearly was at *Georgics* 1.60.

[35] I mean law (*nomos*) very specifically, as distinct from the Presocratic metaphor of cosmic 'justice'; See Long 2005*a*.

Stoics invoke god for, the Epicureans can do just as well or better with their mindless and impersonal laws of nature. Setting that issue aside for now, I want to conclude this chapter by considering what we can infer from Lucretius about the physics that justifies his faith in such inviolable laws of nature.

We saw that Epicurus traced the necessary periodicity of astronomical phenomena to causal conditions established at the time when the world began. So too Lucretius. As the good Epicurean that he is, he does not attempt to give single explanations for particular phenomena, such as the identity and nature of the sun, where the evidence is compatible with multiple theories. What is incontrovertible, nonetheless, is the evidence of nature's determinacy, whether we are interested in the timing of dawn or seasonal change or a human being's development, or meteorological phenomena: 'Since the first beginnings of causes (*exordia prima*) were like this, and things have occurred thus from the world's first origin, they also return now with regular sequence in determinate order.'[36] This statement (5.677–9) concludes a twenty-four line argument, containing no fewer than six instances of *tempore certo*, to prove that there is nothing remarkable in the regularity of dawn.

The great Italian scholar Giussani (1898, vol. 4, p. 172) interpreted Lucretius' conclusion exactly for what it is—an expression of nature's strict causation and regular sequence in consequence of the causes operative at the world's beginning. His words, as translated, are: 'It is thus in Epicurean atomism that mechanistic blindness and the absolute rule of law are explained and made consistent.' Later commentators, largely under the mistaken belief that Lucretius made room for spontaneous happenings in nature, have simply evaded the plain meaning of our passage.[37] No less troubling is the prejudiced approach to Epicureanism evident in the following comment on our passage by Solmsen (1951, 19), who, after judging it 'the best in the way of theory that Epicurus could offer to explain cosmic regularities', goes on to describe it as a 'somewhat oracular statement which seems to credit the atoms . . . with a mysterious power to effect what the philosopher cannot explain'.

The significance of the world's first structure in determining its subsequent global development is evident from Lucretius' account of how new material from outer space is incorporated (2.1105–17). Since the world began and the formation of sea, earth, and sun, 'numerous bodies [individual atoms] have been added from outside and seeds have been added all around, which the

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[36] 'Regular sequence' is my translation of *conseque*. This word is Lambinus' generally accepted emendation of the unmetrical *consequiae*, which would point to the same sense.

[37] Cf. Ernout and Robin 1925, *ad loc.*; Bailey 1947, vol. 3, pp. 1427–8; Boyancé 1963, 233.

great universe assembled by tossing them about'. This process has enabled sea, earth, sky, and air [the four cosmic masses corresponding to the traditional four elements] to grow. 'For from all regions all bodies are dispersed by impact, each to their own kind, water to water, etc.'

Commenting on this passage, Bailey (1947, vol. 2, p. 976) notes that Lucretius, though drawing on Empedocles' principle of like-to-like attraction, makes the process 'purely mechanical', meaning that it dispenses with Empedocles' divine forces Love and Strife. He then continues with a comment which, like that just quoted from Solmsen, reveals more about the commentator than it does about Epicureanism: 'And yet, as Robin perhaps rightly maintains, [the process] retains, in the idea of the "appropriateness" (*epitēdeiotēs*) of matter to the condition of the whole, a touch of something supra-mechanistic, which makes it, as he thinks, comparable to the theory of the *clinamen* [i.e. swerve] as an attempt to escape from the complete determinism of Democritus.'

As we have seen throughout this Chapter, scholars who have addressed my topic tend to have their own problems over strict causation (hence their eagerness to impute a role for chance in Epicureanism) or reductive materialism. It does not seem to have occurred to them to think that their worries might be due to their expecting the Epicureans to give reasons, in the sense of justifications, for cosmic order. Neither Epicurus nor Lucretius thought it made sense to ask why the world is the way it is, meaning why is it this way and not that way, or what purpose does it serve. What interested them, taking the world the way it is, was identifying the physical processes which make it the way it is.

That those processes exhibit a law-like regularity in the case of animal species was, as we have seen, a prime datum for Lucretius. To respond to the deists, however, he needed more than this acknowledgement. Did atomism provide him with an answer to the question, why does man beget man?

The essence of reproduction is that species breed true to type, and Lucretius was also as committed as Aristotle to the fixity of species. Appeal to these facts, as he took them to be, is one of his main arguments for the existence of atoms: there must be immutable and indestructible bodies at the micro-level in order to account for the regularity and fixity of species.[38] The postulate that there are such bodies, combined with the proposition that atoms of every possible shape are unlimited in number, satisfies a necessary condition for progeny that replicate their parents' form—the availability of suitable material or seeds.

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[38] See 1.159–214 and 584–98 (cited above).

Not content with just that, Lucretius infers that the absence of hybrids—
half-human and half-beast, or half-animal and half-plant—tells us that only
determinate seeds (*semina certa*) and determinate parentage (*certa genetrix*)
can explain our evidence that everything grows true to type (2.700–29). Were
things otherwise, we would have to conclude that atoms are unrestricted in the
kinds of combinations they can enter into. As it is, the fixity of species neces-
sitates the operation of a determinate principle of nature (*certa fieri ratione
necessust*), to the effect that in nutrition only those particles are assimilated
which can be joined to the structure of the creature's body and move in
harmony with this (2.711–16). The implicit thought seems to be that any
reproductive seed can only assimilate atoms that fit the form predetermined
by the parent. Lucretius had a rudimentary theory of genetics.[39]

This theory, of which we lack any details from Epicurus, applies the same
principle that we have noted in connection with his and Lucretius' accounts
of the early history of the world, namely the causal principle that antecedent
structures determine subsequent ones. In fact, Lucretius in the context I have
just discussed goes out of his way to insist that all things, and not just living
beings, 'are bound by these laws', such that 'the same principle sets a limit to
everything' (2.718–19). In his account of the origins of life Lucretius claimed
that the earth was the mother not only of all vegetation but also the original
source of all animals, including human beings (5.783–836). With the passage
of time, the earth has ceased to bring forth animals; its function as mother
of these has been taken over by sexual reproduction, but the species that still
survive preserve the same form that they had when produced by the earth. Far
from countenancing spontaneous generation, as some ancient thinkers did,
Lucretius was firmly committed in biology to universal causation.[40]

The scholars whose work I have discussed in this paper assume that we
can draw on Lucretius to supplement our defective knowledge of Epicur-
us. I make the same assumption, but with the qualifications I have already
registered concerning Lucretius' seemingly much greater emphasis on strict
causation and the seeming originality of his expressions for 'laws of nature'.
Such difference as this represents between the two thinkers is insufficient to
suggest that Epicurus would have baulked at Lucretius' formulations of his

[39] In its early history, the earth did generate 'monsters' (5.837–54), but, for the reasons just
explained, they were unable to grow and reproduce. Lucretius (3.746–7) refers the instincts and
behavioural characteristics of each species to its 'own seed and begetting' (*semine seminioque*), which
cause a 'determinate mentality' (*certa vis animi*) to develop along with the body.

[40] Giussani 1898, vol. 4, p. 172, conjectured that Lucretius traced back the fixity of animal
species to the structures the earth contained during its time of greater fertility.

scientific doctrines. I have found no evidence to think, as many have maintained, that either man allowed sheer contingency or spontaneity to play a role in the explanation of such natural things or events as are accessible to observation. Our world originated from structures formed by the completely aimless motions and aggregations of atoms, and, according to Lucretius, at least one spontaneous motion or swerve was a necessary precursor of world formation. Yet, within our world, as we know it, law-like regularities hold good and will continue to do so as long as the world's basic structure remains intact. This causal sequence can be traced back to the world's original condition. Human actions, thanks to the mind's responsiveness to random swerves of atoms, are not predetermined by any sequence of antecedent causes. But Lucretius never hints at the idea that the swerve is responsible for such 'chance' happenings as many scholars have attributed to the Epicureans.

If, as I presume, Epicurus originated the theory of the swerve, we should suppose that he confined the evidence for its occurrence to actions that persons perform when they experience no constraint on doing what they want to do. He was most anxious to free human life from fate, taking fate to signify 'ineluctable necessity'. As we have seen (p. 162), he distinguished between things that are necessary and things that are not, and he subdivided the non-necessary category into things due to chance and things due to ourselves. I have argued that the things the Epicureans took to be due to chance, though their occurrence could not be excluded in principle, were too insignificant to be identifiable or to represent any *de facto* exception to the operation of strict causation.[41] What Lucretius calls the 'laws of nature' are probably identical to the 'boundaries of fate' except in the case of *libera voluntas*.[42]

If Epicurus was to let physical and inanimate nature explain all phenomena and discharge gods and teleology from any function in running the world, he could make only minimal concessions to spontaneous or purely contingent events. The atomic swerve is *nec plus quam minimum.* and I conjecture that the scope and effect of its operations are equally minimal. At least they cannot

[41] Philodemus, *On signs* col. 36, 11–17, says that 'it is not enough to accept the minimal swerves of atoms on account of what is fortuitious (τὸ τυχηρόν) and what is up to us; one must also show that they do not conflict with any evidence'. This is a defensive statement, the context of which is not the swerve as such, but the Epicureans' criterion of non-contestation by appearances. It does not show that they themselves invoked a category called chance when justifying the possibility of swerves. As Fowler 2002, 308 says: 'The Philodemus reference, if not an error, may be to the chance creation of worlds or possibly even to the psychological phenomena.'

[42] See Lucretius 5.309–10. Bailey 1947 *ad loc.* has no warrant for saying 'there is probably a contrast between *fati* and *foedera*, the former representing the element of chance'.

undermine the knowledge of 'what can be and what cannot be, that is to say, the rationale which limits the power of each thing and gives it its firmly set boundary' (Lucret. 5.88–90, 6.64–6).

POSTSCRIPT

I originally wrote this study some thirty years ago as a contribution to a meeting of the Scottish Association for Ancient Philosophy at the University of St Andrews. I have rewritten much of the earlier version, in order to improve its structure and eliminate unnecessary details; and I have also replaced 'natural law' with 'laws of nature' in my title and elsewhere, to make it absolutely clear that my topic pertains only to physical regularities and has nothing to do with universal moral standards (see Long 2005*a*). My basic argument remains just the same as before.

In the meantime, though much has been written about Epicurus' indeterminism with regard to human agency, no subsequent study, to the best of my knowledge, has challenged my findings concerning the insignificance of chance and the swerve in accounting for natural events outside the psychological sphere; cf. Fowler 2002, 308. Asmis 1984, 284–6, should be consulted for the view that, according to Epicurus and Lucretius, the 'process of generation and destruction keeps on recurring, ever the same, through an infinite time'. Isnardi Parente 1990 discusses the treatment of chance by Diogenianus; but, if he was a late Epicurean, as she persuasively argues, I don't think that anything he said about chance conflicts with my general thesis.

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Pleasure and social utility: the virtues of being Epicurean

The essential message of Epicurean ethics, and indeed of Epicurus' entire philosophy, was encapsulated in the 'fourfold remedy' (*tetrapharmakos*): 'God presents no fears, death no worries. And while good is readily attainable, bad is readily endurable.'[1] Incorporating, as it does, the first four of Epicurus' *Key doctrines* (*Kuriai doxai*), the fourfold remedy is a panacea for unhappiness. Repeated and memorized by Epicurean disciples, it was intended to remind them that supreme happiness was available at any time, provided that they wholeheartedly endorse and base their life upon the practical implications of its four propositions.

At first glance the fourfold remedy is astonishing in its simplicity, optimism, and complacency. Epicurus, however, had no scruples about using the tactics of the advertising man in attracting the attention of his audience.[2] He was confident that reason and experience would consolidate the truths he believed himself to be providing, once a disciple was willing to join him in examining the foundations of happiness and unhappiness.

Even so, the impression of complacency is hard to dispel. By the 'ready attainability of good' Epicurus means sources of pleasurable feelings and equanimity;

[1] (Philodemus, *Adv. soph*. col. 4, 9–14 = LS 25J) ἄφοβον ὁ θεός, ἀν[ύ]ποπτον ὁ θάνατος, κ[αὶ] τἀγαθὸν μὲν εὔκτητ[ον], τὸ δὲ δεινὸν εὐεκκ[αρ]τέρητον.

[2] See Frischer 1982 on 'advertising' in Epicurean recruitment. His study is a searching and original contribution to the social attitudes and organization of Epicureanism, even though some may hesitate, as I do, to accept his very interesting suggestions about the use made of iconography for recruitment purposes.

by the 'ready endurability of bad' he means the brevity of intense pains and the relatively mild disturbance that long pains cause.[3] Underlying the assurances about attainability of good and endurability of bad, there appears to be an assumption which is not generally stated in studies of Epicureanism: the material goods that a would-be Epicurean must minimally possess are assumed to be available in his or her environment, and likewise, that environment is assumed to be largely free from the harmful things which could cause even an Epicurean to fail to achieve a preponderance of pleasure over pain.[4] Notoriously, Epicurus insisted that 'bread and water generate the pinnacle of pleasure, whenever they are taken by someone who needs them' (*Ep. Men.* 131). As part of his doctrine of 'natural and necessary desires', he argued that we never *need* more than simple foods in order to achieve the greatest pleasure concomitant upon losing the pangs of hunger. But a minimum diet is essential to an Epicurean, and we may add: minimum clothing, housing, and medical care. An Epicurean also needs assurances that he or she will not be molested by wild animals, subjected to the privations and continuous torture, it may be, of a concentration camp, or live in an environment where vandalism, assault, mockery, and other forms of psychological pressure are the order of the day.

Responding to these minimal material needs and absences of external disturbance a ready and partly effective answer is available. Epicurus, plainly a man of some wealth in his later years, provided the estate he acquired just outside the city wall of Athens as a source of food and protection to his immediate followers. Doubtless the other Epicurean communities, which followed the model of the Attic Garden, made similar provisions. Thus, we may be encouraged to think, Epicureans were philosophers who completely opted out of city life, founded 'alternative' communities, and had the material wherewithal to live utterly self-sufficient lives, with their spiritual welfare safely secured by the master's teaching.

We know little about the organization of the original Garden and even less about other Epicurean amenities. I am prepared to believe that the Garden symbolized, and up to a point satisfied, the provision of those needs, external to the individual, which Epicurean happiness requires. I repeat, however, that minimal subsistence, security, housing, and medical care are presuppositions of

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[3] *KD* 3–4 = LS 21C; *Ep. Men.* 130 = LS 21B; *Sent. Vat.* 25 = LS 21F.3; ibid. 33 = LS 21G1; Lucr. 2.1–36 = LS21W.

[4] In the literature I have consulted, Guyau 1910 comes the closest to recognizing Epicurus' concern that his goal of life should be thoroughly realistic, but he limits himself to pointing out the irrelevance to the goal of riches, luxury, honours, and political power. See also Müller 1972, 22 ff.

Epicurean lifestyles; and Epicurus himself endorses my point by his insistence upon the ready attainability of good and endurability of bad. The effectiveness of his 'fourfold remedy' requires more than the Garden as its external conditions. It needs a neighbouring environment which will tolerate the Epicurean community (if that is what we have in the Garden), and provide it with any basic materials absent from the Garden that its members require in order to 'live as happily as Zeus' (*Sent. Vat.* 33 = LS 33.1). The point I am making is just this: pre-social human beings, as Lucretius conceives of them, could not have lived the Epicurean life; the minimal subsistence and security would not have been available.

On the basis of this preamble, I want to raise certain questions concerning the relationship between Epicurean ethics, social and political theory, and anthropology. Was Epicurus simply complacent about or neglectful of the possibility that some people might lack the minimal provisions his ethics requires? Was he content to be parasitical upon the existence of a relatively stable, non-Epicurean society outside the Garden, which made that retreat's existence possible? What, in other words, is his moral assessment of the wider world, and are the prescriptions for happiness that he advances intended to change the lives of whole communities as well as individuals? Did Epicurus think, with John Stuart Mill, that 'poverty, in any sense implying suffering, may be completely extinguished by the wisdom of society, combined with the good sense and providence of individuals'?[5] Mill regarded Epicurus as a utilitarian precursor.[6] Does Epicurean ethics concern itself with, or even entertain the concept of, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'?

In approaching these questions, it is essential to recognize the prejudice which informs most ancient, and a good many modern, evaluations of Epicureanism. If we think that direct intervention in political processes and established systems of education or cultural practices are the hallmark of a person's general concern for human well-being, Epicurus fails the test. One of his most famous dicta is the injunction to 'liberate oneself from everyday affairs and politics' (*Sent. Vat.* 58 = LS 22D1). He repeatedly stresses the necessity, for a happy life, of disengagement from the populace in general and of securing freedom from fear of one's neighbours. He implies in a good many places (and Lucretius dwells constantly on the theme) that fame, status, and political

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[5] *Utilitarianism*, in Warnock 1962, 266.

[6] Ibid. 256: 'Those who know anything about the matter are aware that every writer, from Epicurus to Bentham, who maintained the theory of utility, meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain.'

power are highly unpromising means to secure the goods that human beings, by their nature, require in order to live free from pain and anxiety. Bailey (1928, 517, 520) refers to 'a marked churlishness and a depressing timidity about the [Epicurean] "wise man's" action . . . an austere and almost cynical devotion to self-interest'. Many other upper-class Englishmen, trained in highly competitive private schools to become scholars of Balliol College and administrators of imperial Britain, will have shared Bailey's reactions. Bailey tries his best to credit Epicurus with 'nobility', but plainly feels the strain of attaching this quality to a philosophy which he finds a 'rather arid desert . . . on its social side'.

What was difficult for Bailey was virtually impossible for pagans such as Cicero and Plutarch or Christians like Lactantius. Profoundly troubled by Epicurus' virtual atheism and certain materialism, these in their different ways were all men of action, ambitious, heavily involved in the political world. Stoics, to be sure, could agree with Epicurus on the indifference of material prosperity for human happiness; but the Stoic wise man takes part in politics, unless he is prevented from doing so (DL 7.121), and his model of the physical world is a hierarchical political structure organized and run by Zeus, with human beings in the second rank and other living beings disposed by descending ranks. Stoicism, as the Romans appreciated, could be readily accommodated to their native ideals of heroic struggle, patriotism, and self-sacrifice. Even a Roman emperor could be a Stoic, but an Epicurean philosopher could hardly govern a state and stay consistent with his maxim to 'live without being noticed'.[7]

Apart from such impediments to sympathy for Epicurean withdrawal, we have to reckon with the dominance of competitive values in ancient society, or at least its most influential echelons, and the difficulty moralists experienced in promoting the quiet or cooperative excellences to the kind of approval so readily accorded to status, wealth, and power.[8] The difficulties Cicero experienced in condemning the evils caused by the rampant pursuit of glory, while unable to refrain from congratulating himself for his own consular achievements, may illustrate my general point.[9] By apparently advocating detachment from established society, by preaching the dangers of political life and insisting upon quietude as the recipe for happiness, Epicurus

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[7] Fowler 1989, 122–34, is an excellent survey and assessment of the main evidence for Epicurean antipathy to organized politics.

[8] I allude to the influential work of Adkins 1960.

[9] See Chapter 15 of this volume, p. 319.

could not fail to be perceived as indifferent to, if not inimical to, the good of the existing social order. Not a man of action in the obvious sense, he could scarcely be a philanthropist, someone concerned for human well-being quite generally.

The ancient charge against Epicurus is stated baldly by Lactantius: 'Epicurus denies the existence of human society; he says that each person is concerned for himself; that there is no one who loves another except for his own sake.'[10] There is a wealth of evidence to show that Epicurus did not deny the existence of human society; nor does the charge that he admitted only self-interested motivations pay regard to the kind of pleasures and friendships which inform the fully developed Epicurean life, as we shall see. Lactantius' statements to the contrary, like similar assertions by other ancient writers, are his inference, and his second sentence indicates how this runs: Epicurus rejects the notion that association in a political community is essential to human flourishing and thereby *implies* that all persons are only concerned for their individual selves. Therefore, we are to take it, he must deny the existence of human society as such. This inference will only hold if human society requires the entirely disinterested or altruistic as its members. No ancient political theorist ever developed a view of society based upon such utopian premises. Epicurus' supposedly antisocial leanings were also perceived in statements he is said to have made concerning the desirability of not marrying and of not having children.[11] We do not know the context of these remarks. In the light of his general optimism and philanthropic tone, they provide no basis for supposing him to advocate the rapid cessation of the human race.

Marxists, who have always been attracted to Epicurus, avoid such absurd misinterpretations of his social prescriptions. For Farrington (1967, 18), the Garden resembles the simple 'city of pigs' described by Socrates in book 2 of Plato's *Republic*. The comparison is suggestive, but I know of no evidence that the Garden had either the self-sufficiency or the diversity in trade and complexity of even the primitive Platonic city. Farrington wants to envisage the Epicurean community as a form of society in which the state has already 'withered away'. He writes (p. 27): 'Only the simple form of the State was "natural," for this was held together by the natural impulse of friendship. The fully developed State, with its code of laws enforced by external sanctions, was not natural to man.' This is to read Epicurus as Rousseau, to whom Farrington

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[10] *Inst.* 3.17.42 = Usener 523, 540; cf. Philippson 1910, 294, and Müller 1972, 35.
[11] Usener 525–6. See Frischer 1982, 61–2, for discussion and bibliography.

(p. 23) in fact likens him. Yet Epicurus nowhere says or implies that a simple state is more natural than a complex one, nor does he say or imply that a state which enforces its laws by external sanctions is not natural. The Epicurean approach to society is more complex and far more hard-headed than this naive defence of its simplest forms envisages.

Writing to one of the Ptolemies, Epicurus' follower Colotes stated a position we have every reason to think would have been endorsed by any sane member of the school:

Those who drew up laws and customs and established monarchical and other forms of government gave life great security and tranquillity, and banished turmoil; and if anyone should remove these things, we would live a life of beasts, and one man on meeting another will all but devour him.[12]

This passage, by no means isolated as we shall see, is sufficient to refute Farrington. Colotes chooses his terminology with care. Security (*asphaleia*), or 'a secure life', is described as 'nature's good' by Epicurus himself—that which people strive after 'on the basis of nature's affinity' (κατὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως οἰκεῖον, *KD* 7 = LS 22C1); and the same point is reinforced in a further maxim where he says that anything which can provide confidence of not being molested by human beings is 'a natural good' (*KD* 6). The positive value of laws, customs, and government, provided that they yield the security Colotes claims for them, is thus an inevitable consequence of their relationship to a good that everyone naturally wants. Notice too that Colotes couples provision of 'security and tranquillity' with 'removal of turmoil'. Interpret these, as we may, by 'pleasure and the absence of pain', and we have constitutional government given the firmest sanction possible in Epicureanism: instrumentality in bringing about the only goods which are primary, final, and intrinsic.

Colotes, anticipating Hobbes, has no illusions about the state of human life if the apparatus of government and law is removed; human beings will revert to the law of the jungle. Out of deference to Ptolemy perhaps, Colotes may give the impression that Hellenistic society has firmly distanced itself from

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[12] Plut., *Adv. Col.* 30, 1124D = LS 22R. This important, but frequently neglected, evidence is handled most irresponsibly by Farrington 1967, 27–8. Unable to credit its positive approach to conventional society, he attaches to it, as if it were the next sentence of Colotes' remarks to Ptolemy, the following: λέγειν δεῖ πῶς ἄριστα τὸ τῆς φύσεως τέλος συντηρήσει καὶ πῶς τις ἑκὼν εἶναι μὴ πρόσεισιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν πληθῶν ἀρχάς. In fact this passage (31, 1125C) is separated from the previous one by two pages of Greek text, and there is not the slightest indication that Plutarch is still quoting Colotes. (Usener includes the latter passage on its own as his no. 554.) Even the second passage, however, only says that a political career should be approached 'reluctantly'—not that it should be avoided in every circumstance.

that danger. Epicurus himself, however, repeatedly emphasizes the blessings of a social system that completely secures its members from the risk of being molested by hostile people: 'Those who had the power to eliminate all fear of their neighbours, through having the firmest guarantee of security, lived together accordingly in the most pleasurable way' (*KD* 40 = LS 22C2). I am not suggesting that Epicurus supposed Athens or any other Hellenistic state to be fully satisfactory in the security it provided; he almost certainly thought otherwise. What the evidence so far reviewed shows is just this: an Epicurean will value political communities insofar as they are conducive to the stable provision of those things he regards as supremely worthwhile.[13] A simple society might fail this test, and a complex one could pass it. For reasons yet to be considered, Epicurus would think a city like that which William Penn hoped to found far more likely to satisfy basic human needs than modern Detroit. But, for all that, he does not categorically deny that the head of General Motors or the president of the United States could achieve an Epicurean happiness: 'Certain people wanted to become famous and admired, thinking that they would thus acquire security from other men. Consequently, if such people's life was secure, they did obtain nature's good; but if it is not secure, they are not in possession of the objective which they originally sought after on the basis of its natural affinity' (*KD* 7 = LS 22C1).

The Epicurean explanation for the origin of community life and laws was the utility of these institutions in facilitating people's natural and necessary desires for a secure life. In advising his followers to 'live quietly', he has at least three defences to advance against the criticism that such a lifestyle is politically irresponsible and morally complacent. First, he can argue that his ethical theory provides human beings, who are natural and persistent pleasure-seekers, with the strongest of reasons for the peaceful cooperation that legal systems seek to promote. By living in the Garden he does not contract out of the provisions for mutual security which, as he sees it, are the foundation of the utilitarian justice that any community needs. Second, he can argue that contemporary societies, even if they do provide some measure of security for their members, do so inadequately; and that they compound these failings by systems of education, competitive values, religion, and other practices which do great harm to their citizens. Third, he can argue that the Epicurean way

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[13] Philippson 1910, 297, 302–9, was perhaps the first modern scholar to recognize that Epicurus' attitude to society was not one of simple negation. His views on the naturalness of social justice, criticized and refined by Müller 1972, 92–104, have been interestingly amplified by Goldschmidt 1977. See also Nichols 1976, 16, and Frischer 1982, 40.

of life, which threatens no one in its scrupulous adherence to justice and is positively philanthropic in its cultivation of friendship, provides society with a model of how to live best at the present stage of human culture.

In the remainder of this chapter I propose to develop this set of arguments from three perspectives or bodies of material—the basic ethical theory, justice and friendship, and social evolution.

THE BASIC ETHICAL THEORY

The importance of the social context to a just appreciation of Epicurean ethics was clearly perceived by Lucretius. Here is the opening of his sixth book:

It was Athens of glorious name that first long ago bestowed on feeble mortals the produce of corn, and refurbished life, and established laws. It was Athens too that first bestowed soothing pleasures on life, when she gave birth to a man endowed with such insight, who long ago gave utterance to everything with truthful voice. Dead though he is, his godlike discoveries spread his fame of old and now it reaches to heaven. When he saw that mortals were already supplied with almost everything that need demands for their livelihood, and that their life as far as possible was firm and secure, that men had abundance of power through wealth and social status and fame and took pride in the good name of their sons, yet that at home no one's heart was any less troubled, and that they were constantly wrecking their life despite their intentions, under a compulsion to rage with aggressive complaints, he recognized that the flaw was there, caused by the utensil itself. . . . and so he purged people's hearts with his truthful words, and established the limits of desire and fear, and laid out the nature of the highest good to which we all strive. (6.1–17, 24–6 = LS 21X)

In these lines Lucretius looks back on the achievement of Epicurus within a broadly historical perspective.[14] His comments invite us to approach the ethics as the panacea for people's *internal* well-being. He imagines Epicurus reviewing Athenian culture and society in the guise of someone asking the question: 'Why are these people unhappy? Their material needs are satisfied. They have power and wealth and fame. They do not lack external security or stability. Yet *in spite of all this*, they are profoundly unhappy.' Hence, Epicurus deduced, the flaw lay in people's minds—the utensil, as Lucretius calls it—with the failure to understand the 'limits of desire and fear' and to know the means by which to secure the happiness for which they strove.

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[14] See Furley 1978 for an interesting discussion of Lucretius' treatment of human history as viewed before and after Epicurus' revelation.

There is no need to argue at length for the accuracy of Lucretius' account of Epicurus' philosophical motivation and the causes of people's unhappiness. The poet's hagiography was well founded on words by Epicurus available to ourselves. My particular interest in the Lucretian panegyric is its starting from a highly positive assessment of the external amenities of Hellenistic Athens. This chimes with Colotes' comments on law and government that I mentioned above; and similar points concerning the great benefits conferred by early legislators are made at length in a work by Epicurus' successor Hermarchus (discussed below). The congruence of other Epicureans on this point should encourage us to credit the founder himself with a similar judgement: that is to say, in setting out his ethical theory, he takes it to be self-evident that human beings have reached a level of civilization and technical sophistication more than sufficient to satisfy the external conditions of happiness.[15] By these conditions he includes not only provisions for basic bodily needs but, still more importantly in terms of his great stress upon equanimity, the security which judicial systems and, at a more personal level, friends facilitate. Epicurus' assumptions concerning these external provisions need to be remembered when we read the *Letter to Menoeceus*, his longest surviving ethical manifesto. Too often this is treated as a complete statement of his moral doctrines. In fact, as a comparison with the *Key doctrines* reveals, it omits any explicit mention of the two principal concepts of Epicurean social theory: the 'contract' which constitutes justice, and friendship. The absence from this letter of any treatment of these matters or of how Menoeceus can be confident of feeding, clothing himself, and so forth, should not be read as evidence of Epicurus' lack of concern about such external necessities in his moral theory. Menoeceus, we must take it, is adequately provided for in these respects; what he needs education and practice in are the internal elements of happiness.

That Epicurus is assuming a particular kind of society, in his address to Menoeceus, emerges from the letter itself. The concept of desires that are 'neither natural nor necessary' presupposes familiarity with, and accessibility to, wealth and luxury. Fear of the gods, we can infer from Lucretius, is a malady affecting modern rather than primitive humanity. (A contemporary parallel would be fear of nuclear war.) Epicurus also assumes that Menoeceus can find a like-minded friend with whom he will need to rehearse the

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[15] Cf. Sinclair 1951, 260: '[Epicurus] knew that in the past the progress of civilization had been helped forward by the active work of wise kings and rulers but . . . he regarded that work as completed.'

ethical doctrines 'day and night' in order to secure blessedness for himself (*Ep. Men.* 135).

From the same philosopher who is reported to have said that 'the pleasure of the stomach is the beginning and root of all good' (Athen. 12.546F = LS 21M), Menoeceus is told (132) that what produces the pleasant life is 'sober reasoning'. If Epicurus were advocating hedonism in place of some other ethical doctrine, this would seem austere to say the least. But Epicurus does not set out to orient people towards pleasure and avoidance of pain. He takes it to be self-evident, in my opinion, that these are the natural motivations and objectives of all human (and animal) action.[16] The problem he seeks to resolve is the failure of people to achieve the hedonic happiness they *naturally* want and strive after. His ethics, in essence, is a system of educating people in the means by which they can secure a whole lifetime in which pleasurable experience of body and mind predominates over pain. Menoeceus, he assumes, lacks nothing from his external environment to render such a life unattainable. Therefore, if he and other people continue to be unhappy, the impediment must be internal. On Epicurus' diagnosis, the internal impediments can be reduced to two factors: irrational fears and vain and unlimited desires.[17] Fear of death and fear of the gods, he proposes, can be dispelled by argument. As for frustrated desires, they are caused by a misunderstanding of the limited range of wants we need to satisfy in order to be happy, the failure to make proper use of the materials available to satisfy the necessary desires, and the false supposition that pleasure or happiness can be increased beyond removal of pain and anxiety.

The two internal impediments to happiness can be overcome by *one* thing—virtue, and in particular, the virtue of prudence, *phronēsis*. Prudence is the essential internal instrument of our acquiring the pleasures that are readily available and of enduring the pains that we cannot avoid. The happy life, as Epicurus conceives of it, needs to be a highly intelligent life—one in which we see the utility for our happiness of applying rational judgement to every source of pleasure or pain that we encounter:

What produces the pleasant life is not continuous drinking and parties or pederasty or womanizing or the enjoyment of fish and other dishes of an expensive table, but sober reasoning which tracks down the causes of every choice and avoidance,

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[16] *Ep. Men.* 128–9, Cicero, *Fin.* 1.29–30. Cooper 1999, 485 ff., on the other hand, maintains that Epicurus was not a psychological hedonist.

[17] Usener 485, ἢ γὰρ διὰ φόβον τις κακοδαιμονεῖ ἢ δι' ἀόριστον καὶ κενὴν ἐπιθυμίαν.

and which banishes the opinions that beset souls with the greatest confusion. Of all this, the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Therefore prudence is even more precious than philosophy, and it is the natural source of all the remaining virtues: it teaches the impossibility of living pleasurably without living prudently, honourably, and justly <and the impossibility of living prudently, honourably, and justly> without living pleasurably. For the virtues are naturally linked with living pleasurably, and living pleasurably is inseparable from them. (*Ep. Men.* 132 = LS 21B)

The cardinal importance of this thesis is indicated by the inclusion of its last sentences as the fifth key doctrine (*KD*) following the full statement of the 'fourfold remedy'. Notice that Epicurus states the effectiveness of prudence, as the producer of the pleasant life, in an utterly general way. He is not simply advertising its efficacy as the instrument of day-to-day applications of the hedonistic calculus. What he describes is a mental disposition, a totally rational outlook on life, a cast of mind which has insight into the causes of every choice and avoidance, and which banishes the opinions that beset souls in the plural (not just Menoeceus' soul) with the greatest confusion. Moral philosophers frequently contrasted with Epicurus (for instance, Plato and Aristotle) would completely endorse his claim that a truly pleasurable life must be a virtuous life, and that a virtuous life cannot fail to be endowed with pleasure.

This is not to say, however, that Epicurus regards prudence and the other ethical virtues as intrinsically good and desirable, as Platonists, Peripatetics, and Stoics do. He insists that, notwithstanding virtue's 'natural' and inseparable connection to the hedonic life, the contribution that it makes is entirely instrumental: 'I [Epicurus] spit upon the honourable (*to kalon*) and those who vainly admire it, when it produces no pleasure' (Athen. 12.547A = Usener 512). This vivid insistence on the strictly instrumental value of virtue, its subordination and subservience to pleasure, has drawn heavy fire against Epicurus from antiquity to the present day. His liking for shocking phraseology disturbs those who fail to see the complete honesty and significance of his serious commitment to an ethical life as the necessary means of happiness. The same point is made in all due solidity by Diogenes of Oenoanda, where he is clarifying the difference between Epicurean and Stoic views on virtue: 'Now if, my fellow men, the question at issue between these people and ourselves involved examining "What is the means of happiness?" and [if] they wanted to say the virtues, as is in fact true, there would be no need to do anything except to agree with them on the matter' (fr. 26 Chilton = LS 21P). Against the Stoics, Diogenes insists that pleasure is the end of the best life,

with the virtues demoted (as Stoics would say) to being the means of the end's realization.

Epicurus, as I understand him, thinks that it is pure self-deception to suppose that human beings *can* have any ultimate goal other than their own happiness, construed as pleasure and absence of pain. Bentham and some others have agreed with him, and there are familiar refutations of this claim, which I pass over here. For my purpose in this chapter what matters is not the factual truth of hedonism as ethics or psychology, but what Epicurus makes of hedonism on the understanding that he is convinced of its truth for all human agency. The point I wish to emphasize is his going as far as he consistently can in promoting the necessity of virtue for happiness.

JUSTICE AND FRIENDSHIP

No formal analysis or comprehensive list of virtues has survived, if there ever was such a thing, from the pen of Epicurus.[18] What he gives us in the *Letter to Menoeceus* (and *KD* 5) is simply 'prudence' (*phronēsis*) and 'its offshoot virtues'. The latter are seemingly embraced by 'living honourably (*kalōs*) and justly'. That these virtues actually 'generate' the pleasurable life (τὸν ἡδὺν γεννᾷ βίον, *Ep. Men.* 132) is a striking claim. Among other things, it denies any perch to the notion, ubiquitous in Greek popular morality, that justice and pleasure are natural antagonists. Epicurus appears to be saying that the only way we can dispose ourselves to the world so as fully to satisfy our natural and necessary desires for pleasure and absence of pain is by a rational plan of life that includes a commitment to 'living honourably and justly'.

Do this plan and commitment, I want to ask, require the successful pleasure-seeker to have a disposition which includes regard and sympathetic understanding for other people's happiness? Let me repeat that what 'prudence' is said to launch is removal of the opinions that beset *souls* (in the plural) with confusion. Does this imply that someone endowed with prudence will be naturally interested in removing confusion from other people's souls as well as one's own? The text does not require such a reading nor does it appear to exclude it. Again, prudence will minimally enable the prudent to determine their own choices so as to secure happiness for themselves. But do we know that

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[18] Much of Cicero, *Fin.* 1.46–53 reads like a second-rate attempt to show what an Epicurean could do with the four cardinal virtues of Stoicism.

the prudent pleasure-seeker's practical reasoning operates without any concern
that other people pursue their happiness on a similarly rational foundation?

We know, I submit, that it cannot. The prudent Epicurean will want neigh-
bours to share a commitment to justice; that is, to perceive the utility of the
social contract that what I need for my own happiness can only be assured if
I do nothing to frustrate your interest in the same goal for yourself. Epicur-
ean justice is a commitment to the utility of not doing as one would not be
done by (*KD* 31–8). Coupled with prudence, it implies recognition of the
fact that everyone has good reason to cultivate rationality and justice in one's
neighbours.[19] But justice, as so construed, will do nothing by itself to generate
sympathy or pleasurable sentiments, even though it can be intelligibly advoc-
ated as a means of avoiding pain. The Epicurean life also needs to contain a
sufficiency of pleasurable experiences, as these are ordinarily understood, to
provide the agreeable memories and anticipations which will always suffice
to make life more pleasurable than painful.[20] If the virtues, as advocated to
Menoeceus, are to generate the pleasurable life, under physically adverse con-
ditions, they need to endow a person with experiences and attitudes that are
intensely joyous.

This brings me to consider what Epicurus means by 'living honourably'
(*kalōs*). The expression is phrased too broadly for us to ascertain more than its
most general implications for living pleasurably, but that should encourage us
to interpret it by standard Greek, rather than technical, usage. In its context in
the *Letter to Menoeceus*, with the reference to virtues, living *kalōs* must signify
a morally good life. Since Epicurus couples it with living justly (*dikaiōs*), he
could be simply adjoining two of the most standard terms of ethical vocabu-
lary, saying that the Epicurean life must conform to the popular connotations
of these words. But even if he is not referring to justice in its special Epicur-
ean sense (and that is implausible), some point is to be sought in the addi-
tion of *kalōs*.[21] This word is a moral adverb of broader scope than *dikaiōs*; it
also invites the reader to find positive qualities in actions—courage, benefi-
cence, nobility—which justice does not invoke. My suggestion is that 'living
honourably' should be interpreted as the positive recipe for social relations

[19] For a good defence of self-interest as the only rational foundation for morality, building upon
Glaucon's argument in Plato, *Rep.* 2, 358a–359a, see Fisher 1976–7.
[20] Cic., *Tusc.* 5.95–6 = LS 21T. See this volume, p. 12, for Epicurus' deathbed comments on
his own persisting happiness in spite of extreme pain.
[21] For the conjunction of the two terms cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 4.4, 1291a41.

in Epicureanism, and thus be distinguished from the narrowly prudential requirements of justice.[22]

As I pointed out, the absence of reference to friendship in the *Letter to Menoeceus* is striking. Yet its significance for the Epicurean life is repeatedly stressed as paramount in the *Key doctrines* and elsewhere, for instance: 'Of the things wisdom acquires for the blessedness of life as a whole, far the greatest is the possession of friendship' (*KD* 27 = LS 22e1); 'Friendship dances round the world, announcing to us all that we should wake up and felicitate one another' (*Sent. Vat.* 52 = LS 22F5). And, of particular resonance for 'living honourably': 'The noble (*gennaios*) person is chiefly concerned with wisdom and friendship. Of these the former is a mortal good, but the latter is immortal' (*Sent. Vat.* 78 = LS 22F7).

A 'noble' person is one who lives *kalōs*. Such a life, and what it demands according to the plainest meanings of the word, fit Epicurean statements of friendship too well to be accidental. In a list of the wise man's actions we are told that he will never give up a friend, and will even on occasion die for the friend (DL 10.120–1). This fits the maxim: 'For the sake of friendship it is even necessary to take risks' (*Sent. Vat.* 28 = LS 22F2). According to Plutarch, Epicurus said that, 'though choosing friendship for the sake of pleasure, he takes on the greatest pains on behalf of his friends' (*Adv. Col.* 8, 1111B = LS 22H). According to the Ciceronian account:

Without friendship we are quite unable to secure a joy in life which is steady and lasting, nor can we preserve friendship itself unless we love our friends as much as ourselves. Therefore friendship involves both this [empathy] and the link with pleasure. For we rejoice in our friends' joy as much as in our own, and are equally pained by their distress. The wise man, therefore, will have just the same feelings toward his friend as for himself and will work as much for a friend's pleasure as he would for his own. (*Fin.* 1.67–8 = LS 22O3)

Plutarch, again, reports the thesis that Epicureans regard benefiting as more pleasurable than being benefited.[23]

In all these passages (and there is much more of the same kind) friendship involves attitudes and actions which would naturally be described as noble or

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[22] Outside Epicureanism of course, καλός has a powerful political ring; cf. Aristotle, *EE* 1.5,1216a25–7, ὁ μὲν γὰρ πολιτικὸς τῶν καλῶν ἐστι πράξεων προαιρετικὸς αὐτῶν χάριν, οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ χρημάτων καὶ πλεονεξίας ἕνεκεν ἅπτονται τοῦ ζῆν οὕτως.

[23] *Moralia* 778C and 1097A = Usener 544.

honourable. Equally clearly, these attitudes and actions are never dissociated from the pleasure accruing to agent and recipient. I am prepared to conjecture, therefore, that the virtue of 'living honourably', and its special contribution to the pleasurable life, is to be best explained (or at least illustrated) by its utility in securing the kind of friendships that do most to promote Epicurean happiness. The virtue itself can be interpreted as a purely instrumental good, in parallel with justice; its proposed link with friendship does not imply the upgrading of beneficence, noble endurance, and so on to a *per se* value which ignores the social context or personal relationship of benefactor and benefited. (Nor, however, does it imply that an Epicurean cannot derive pleasure from benefiting strangers.) But given the kind of relationship that Epicurean friendship prescribes, a conceptual link between 'living virtuously' (i.e. honourably) and friendship is strongly suggested by the following text: 'All friendship is a virtue for its own sake, but it originates from (self-) advantage.'[24] The word for virtue, *aretē*, is generally emended to *hairetē* to yield the sense 'choiceworthy'. It should be noted, however, that though the emendation is easy and makes for a more natural expression, Aristotle sanctions the designation of friendship as 'a kind of virtue' (*EN* 8.1, 1155a3).

Either way, friendship for an Epicurean has a positive value and constitutive connection with happiness, which needs to be clearly distinguished from that of justice, or at least the justice of the social contract. No intrinsic value pertains to the latter. But friendship appears to be both a means to pleasure—by the benefits and security it provides—and also a major part of the pleasurable life—in fact, itself a pleasure.[25]

I have been arguing that the complete Epicurean life should be construed as not only self-protective, law-abiding, and irenic, but also as actively philanthropic. Friendship, honourably pursued, is taken to be a prime determinant of a life in which pleasure will consistently prevail over pain. This condition of Epicurean happiness is entirely consistent with the basic concepts of his moral system: the limit on natural and necessary desires, the notion that the pleasure ensuing on absence of pain can be varied but not increased, the superiority

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[24] *Sent. Vat.* 23 = LS 22F1. Πᾶσα φιλία δι᾽ ἑαυτὴν ἀρετή [αἱρετή Usener] · ἀρχὴν δ᾽ εἴληφεν ἀπὸ τῆς ὠφελείας. The MS reading is retained by Bollack 1969. Rist 1972, 132, attempts (unconvincingly, I think) to give an instrumental sense to δι᾽ ἑαυτὴν, saying 'perhaps he [Epicurus] merely means not that it [friendship] is ultimately valuable . . . but that it leads directly and without intermediaries to the acquisition of pleasure'. See further Müller 1972, 118 ff.

[25] At this point, in the original version of this study, I outlined, in a long note, the views of Phillip Mitsis on Epicurean friendship, which he had kindly sent me in advance of their publication. In this version I take up these points in a Postscript.

of mental to bodily pleasure, and above all, the importance of recollection and anticipation as factors in securing the continuing dominance of pleasure over pain (cf. Cic. *Tusc.*, n. 20 above). The thesis also accords completely with what we know about Epicurus' life as a philosopher. Evidently he regarded himself as having achieved the happiness he promised to others. The principal source of that happiness, on his own account, was doing and writing and living the kind of philosophy by which, as he put it, 'the suffering of the soul could be expelled' (LS 25C). Thus a life devoted to propagating and developing a panacea for human unhappiness was found to be supremely pleasurable by its own founder.

But, one may object, friends are not humankind, much less fellow citizens in general. Even if Epicurus' utterly unrestricted philanthropy is self-evident, his ethics limits the scope of that sentiment to friends. It does nothing, the objection will continue, to promote in its adherents their own concern for the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Like so many well-known maxims, the 'greatest happiness principle' is rarely referred back to its original contexts. Mill himself wrote:

It is a misapprehension of the utilitarian mode of thought, to conceive it as implying that people should fix their minds upon so wide a generality as the world, or society at large. The great majority of good actions are intended not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up; and the thoughts of the most virtuous person need not on these occasions travel beyond the particular persons concerned, except so far as is necessary to assure himself that in benefiting them he is not violating the rights . . . of any one else. The multiplication of happiness is, according to the utilitarian ethics, the object of virtue: the occasions on which any person (except one in a thousand) has it in his power to do this on an extended scale, in other words to be a public benefactor, are but exceptional. (*Utilitarianism*, in Warnock 1962, 270)

The honourable life in Epicureanism, or the joint contributions of friendship and justice, are quite consonant with this version of utilitarianism. Some Epicureans who had the power, as they saw it, to multiply happiness on an extended scale fit Mill's exceptions, most conspicuously Diogenes of Oenoanda, who erected his great inscription, 'since it is right to help posterity (for they too are ours even if they are not yet born) and besides it is philanthropic to assist strangers who are here'.[26]

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[26] fr. 2, col. 4, 13 ff. Chilton 1971: δίκαιο[ν δ' ἐστι καὶ] τοῖς μ[εθ' ἡ]μᾶς ἐσομένοις βοηθῆσαι—κἀκεῖνοι γάρ εἰσιν ἡμέτεροι καὶ εἰ <μὴ> γεγόνασι πώ—πρὸς δὲ δὴ φιλάνθρωπον

SOCIAL EVOLUTION

If Epicurean ethics, considered purely as theory, anticipates much of Victorian utilitarianism, the resemblances are reinforced when we take account of Epicurean approaches to society and social evolution. Passages in Lucretius and in the less familiar work of Hermarchus, Epicurus' successor, indicate that the success of a social system is to be measured entirely by its utility in producing the primary goods that all of its members need. I take the Lucretian account first.

Primitive people were solitary and brutish, totally occupied with satisfying their basic bodily needs. Pre-social, 'they could not have the common good in view, nor did they know how to make mutual use of any customs or laws' (5.958–9, *nec commune bonum poterant spectare neque ullis | moribus inter se sciebant nec legibus uti*). Here is the totally self-centred human being, paraded by detractors of Epicurean ethics—'taught to apply his strength and live on his own account, just for himself' (5.961, *sponte sua sibi quisque valere et vivere doctus*). With the invention of fire-making and rudimentary technology, human beings started to socialize and live as families. The outcome of this was a 'softening' (*mollescere*, 5.1014) of their physical strength, and, it should be emphasized, of their emotional attitudes:

Then too neighbours began to form friendships (*amicitiem*), eager not to harm one another and not to be harmed; and they gained protection for children and for the female sex, when with halting utterances and gestures, they indicated that it is right (*aequum*) for everyone to pity the weak. Yet harmony could not be entirely created; but a good and substantial number preserved their contracts honourably (*caste*). Otherwise the human race would even then have been totally destroyed, and reproduction could not have maintained the generations down to the present day. (5.1019–27 = LS 22K)

καὶ τοῖς παραγεινομένοις ἐπικουρεῖν ξενοῖς. Chilton explains Diogenes' philanthropic sentiment as an infiltration of Stoicism (so too Müller 1972, 128–9). This, though not impossible, is scarcely compelling. Diogenes' philanthropic motivation seems entirely in line with the Epicurean tradition. I am grateful to the late Arthur Adkins for drawing my attention to Cornelius Nepos, whose *Life of Atticus* exemplifies Epicurean philosophy in action along the lines suggested in this chapter: cf. 25.6 for Atticus' not seeking office, 25.11.5 for his helping as many as possible, and especially *sic liberalitate utens nullas inimicitias gessit, quod neque laedebat quemquam neque, si quam iniuriam acceperat, non malebat oblivisci quam ulcisci.*

Lucretius says as plainly as possible that the shift from primitive life to that of family and society involved a fundamental change in human nature. Like their presocial predecessors, early social people sought the means of their own self-preservation. But the softening of their physical and emotional natures made it impossible to achieve this in a life that was solitary and hostile towards others. Thus 'neighbours began to form friendships, eager not to harm one another and not to be harmed'. It is sometimes supposed that Lucretius here conflates friendship and the social-contract basis of justice, or that his *amicities* involves none of the connotations of Epicurean *philia*.[27] I see no compelling reason for either supposition. Epicurean friendship is as restrictedly prudential in its imagined origins as justice. We do better to suppose that justice, as a social contract institutionalized by laws and punishments, developed as an impersonal extension of implicit agreements embedded in the friendships between neighbours; in other words, that friendship is conceived to be prior to justice. Lucretius seems to envisage early social humans as conducting their lives along lines which begin to accord with the normative principles of Epicurean ethics.

As is well known, the Lucretian story of social development beyond this stage is one of technological progress combined with and promoting fears and desires from which early people were free. The tone of his comments on this history or anthropology is sometimes dispassionate, sometimes positive, and often gloomy; but he never suggests that we would be better off by returning to primitivism.[28] Equally plainly, he sees much of modern culture as impeding the emergence of happiness not only by the new fears it generates but also by its encouraging desires which are neither natural nor necessary. The ideal society, we can conjecture, would be one which provided its members with internal and external security, and gave them the means of enjoying the kind of rustic simplicity, in company with friends, that inspires his happiest lines: 'And so often, lying in friendly groups on the soft grass near some stream of water under the branches of a tall tree, at no great cost they would give

[27] See Mitsis 1988, 106, who takes me to task for the interpretation I propose above. For a fine analysis of Lucretius' text, which finds in it 'a naturally developing other-concern' (p. 142), see Algra 1997.
[28] Cf. Frischer 1982, 39: 'This addition of self-consciousness means that the Epicurean sage can retain the advantages of civilization that developed only in later phases of history (e.g., the concepts of justice and divinity, and technology), and can at the same time avoid the dangers and failures that characterize more advanced societies.'

pleasure to their bodies. . . . Then were there wont to be jests, and talk, and merry laughter (5.1395 ff., trans. Bailey).'

Hermarchus' treatment of social evolution is preserved in a long quotation or summary by Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 1.7–12.[29] Writing without Lucretius' Roman experience or poetic interests, Hermarchus focuses with great clarity and rigour upon one human institution—punishment for homicide, and its utilitarian grounds. The determining concepts of his analysis are utility (*sympheron*) and the prudence of early legislators and cultural leaders. What motivated these men, he argues, was principally the belief that murder 'is not useful to the general structure of human life' (1.7.2). They succeeded in convincing some people by educating them in the rationality of this principle, and they established punishments to deter those who were not educable. Hermarchus then argues that observation and remembrance of utility would be sufficient, without laws, to protect public and private interests, if everyone clearly observed what was useful and harmful. 'The threat of punishment', he adds, 'is addressed to those who fail to take note of utility' (1.8.5).

In Hermarchus' analysis, social progress is the result of something analogous to Lucretius' change of human nature; but Hermarchus, with his eye on contemporary civilization, attributes this change not to unpremeditated adaptation to the environment but to an increase in rationality generated in the general populace by a few outstanding individuals: 'The unreflective part of the soul, by various forms of education, has arrived at the present condition of civility, as a result of the civilizing devices applied to the irrational motion of desire by those who originally set the masses in order; and these include the prohibition of indiscriminately killing one another' (1.9.54 = LS 22M8).

These culture heroes, as we may call them, were endowed with prudence (*phronēsis*). The principles of utility, to which they drew attention, and their general achievement in curbing other people's irrational desires, are strikingly reminiscent of the good results of 'prudence' that Epicurus indicated to Menoeceus. In discussing that context, I observed that Epicurus' statements should be taken to include the prudent person's interest in removing confusion from other people's souls as well as his own. Hermarchus plainly

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[29] Even if Porphyry is paraphrasing rather than quoting Hermarchus verbatim, Hermarchus can justly be called its author. For further discussion see Philippson 1910, 315–19, Cole 1967, 71 ff., Müller 1972, 74 ff., Goldschmidt 1977, and Vander Waerdt 1988.

supposes that prudence is a quality of mind which naturally extends its benefits from the individual to society in general.

His assessment of the utility of good legislation is in line with the positive comments on government and law that Colotes advanced. Both these Epicureans were writing within or shortly after the lifetime of the founder. The much better-known work of Lucretius reflects a more pessimistic reaction to civic institutions, under the heavy shadows of Roman political and military strife. Yet even Lucretius ends book 5 on a highly optimistic note as he surveys the material, social, and artistic developments of his own modernity and refers these things to people's 'gradual progress' (*pedetemptim progredientis*, 5.1453) under the guidance of experience and application of rationality.

Did Hermarchus, one wonders, conclude his account of social evolution with a Lucretian analysis of what the world lacked before the gospel of Epicurus was proclaimed? Sentiment is ruthlessly excluded from our long surviving fragment; we hear nothing about friendship as a civilizing device. It is hardly mere speculation, however, to suppose that for Hermarchus Epicurus was in the line of the earlier culture heroes, men of great talent and prudence, but who lacked his unique insights into human psychology. Remember how Lucretius singles out the Athenian achievement in legislation and material well-being, only to highlight the leaking utensil, the fears and desires that wreck these advanced people's lives. Hermarchus was doubtless less graphic. But he must have been as anxious as Lucretius to underline the need for Epicurus' philosophy by the people of his time.

CONCLUSION

By juxtaposing well-known principles of Epicurean ethics with less familiar features of their social philosophy, I hope to remove prevalent misconceptions about the school's inactive political stance and withdrawal into a private world. The Epicurean way of life, I began by saying, requires an external environment capable of satisfying people's natural and necessary desires for pleasure and freedom from pain. Epicurus assumes that they have the accumulated cultural experience, intelligence, and wherewithal to secure food and to organize security by legal systems and other means. To a certain extent his contemporary citizens are already utilitarians, in his perception of their

sociology, just as they already pursue the universal objectives of all human beings—pleasure, and avoidance of pain. But competitive values and misconceptions concerning what is fearful or desirable prevent contemporary societies from providing a context in which the pleasurable sentiments and mutual benefits that are essential to our happiness can properly develop. For a life of enduring pleasure, which also has to be an 'honourable life', it is not enough to recognize the utility of refraining from mutual injury. Human nature has reached a stage where justice, as so construed, needs to be augmented by the mutual benefits that only friends will have the understanding and sentiment to bestow on one another. Thus the Epicurean is entitled to claim that his philosophy seeks to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number. He withdraws from much of civic life, not simply to avoid pain to himself, but also to secure the kinds of pleasures that only the like-minded, the similarly committed, can provide for each other. If these are the restricted Millian 'number' whose happiness he directly considers along with his own, he can also say that the Epicurean community is open-ended and offers itself as a model for the future well-being of society as a whole.

On one of his remarkably enterprising and successful searches at Oenoanda, Martin Smith recovered a piece of Diogenes' great inscription which, in its apparently quite certain text, may be translated as follows:

Then truly the life of the gods will pass to human beings. For everything will be full of justice and mutual friendship (*philallēlia*), and there will come to be no need of city-walls or laws and all the things we manufacture on account of one another. As for the necessities derived from agriculture . . .[30]

At this point about half of each line of the inscription becomes defective. In Smith's reconstruction, Diogenes proceeded to describe some of the agricultural activities and to comment on the unavoidable interruptions to philosophy that this provision of the basic natural needs will involve. His supplements are highly plausible, but I will confine comment to the fully preserved section.

Evidently the Epicurean millennium is being described. Farrington (1967) would have appreciated this passage, for up to a point it supports the Marxist interpretation excellently. In this future life of felicitous farming and philosophy, the state has withered away. But I was not wrong earlier to criticize

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[30] Smith 1974, new fragment 21, col. 1, 4 ff.: 21–5: Τότε ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁ τῶν θεῶν βίος εἰς ἀνθρώπους μεταβήσεται. δικαιοσύνης γὰρ ἔσται μεστὰ πάντα καὶ φιλαλληλίας, καὶ οὐ γενήσεται τειχῶν ἢ νόμων χρεία καὶ πάντων ὅσα δι᾿ ἀλλήλους σκευωρούμεθα. περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀπὸ γεωργίας ἀναγκαίων . . . I repeat the translation given in LS 22S.

Farrington for regarding states with enforceable legal codes and defences as 'not natural to man'. Diogenes is describing an indeterminate future, a time when people will no longer need the kind of institutional forms of mutual protection they have at present. Universal justice and mutual friendship will render them redundant. But that time, he is saying, is not yet. Human nature, untransformed by Epicureanism, needs the judicial systems and other civiliz-ing devices that Hermarchus acknowledged. What Epicureanism promises is not a return to primitivism but a society (perhaps a global society, if Diogenes is to be trusted: fr. 25, col. 2 Chilton) that has greatly advanced under the guidance of philosophy.

Archaeologists think they have now discovered the location of Epicurus' Garden: it appears to have been situated immediately north of the city wall between the Dipylon Gate and the Academy.[31] That setting aptly symbolizes the relation of Epicurus to his own society, as I conceive of it—just outside the formal boundary, but sufficiently close to have contact and influence. I have argued that prudence, in Epicurean ethics, secures hedonic happiness in three principal ways. First, it gives individuals the understanding which will enable them so to organize their desires and aversions that they can always acquire sufficient pleasure and tranquillity to counterbalance unavoidable pains. Second, it furnishes them with reasons to assent to the general utility of 'natural justice' and thus do nothing to put their own or other people's interests in non-aggression at risk. Third, it trains their sentiments by displaying the intrinsic relationship between self-gratification and friendships which can involve the most active concern for another's happiness. In all of this we can recognize nuclei of ideas associated with even more famous names—Jesus, Marx, and Freud. Epicurus, though much of his thought is firmly rooted in the Greek tradition, was too innovative overall to gain a fair hearing from his intellectual rivals; and the process of rehabilitation is still far from complete.

POSTSCRIPT

Of the issues I raise in this study, the one that has generated most subsequent discussion concerns the foundation and consistency of Epicurus' theory of friendship: see Mitsis 1988, ch. 3, Annas 1993, 236–44, O'Keefe 2001, and

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[31] See the drawing in LS vol. 1, p. 4.

Algra 2003. In n. 24 above (and in LS vol. 2, p. 132) I tentatively defend the Ms reading *aretē* in *Sent. Vat.* 23, rather than accept the emendation *hairetē*. The latter is certainly easier as Greek, but on either reading a verb has to be supplied, to complete the syntax, and on either reading the main philosophical issue that engages scholars is the text's claim that friendship has *per se* value, whether as a 'virtue' or as 'choiceworthy'.

According to Mitsis 1988, Epicurus' concept of friendship verges too closely on altruism to be consistent with the main concepts and aims of his ethics. He finds a conflict between the Epicurean *telos* as a purely self-regarding state, to which friendship should contribute only instrumentally, and the apparent valuation of it as intrinsically desirable. He also argues that the value Epicurus places on friendship imperils the self-sufficiency and invulnerability to fortune that are necessary for lasting equanimity.

Mitsis develops these points with much skill. However, neither objection, in my opinion, is decisive. Nowhere, as far as I can see, does Epicurus say that an Epicurean will act for his friends in ways which conflict with his own pleasure or happiness. If he endures great pains, or even gives up his life, for his friends, we are to conclude that he does not sacrifice his happiness in doing so. Moreover, ever since Plato's *Republic* (2, 357b–d), philosophers had acknowledged that something could be good both instrumentally and intrinsically. If friendship can be a pleasure (as I have argued that it is for Epicurus), that is, if the enjoyment of a given action or mental state can consist in the benefiting or the thought of a friend or of a friend's good, no problem for a hedonist seems to arise. Why should benefiting a friend not be as clearly pleasurable as listening to music or playing tennis?

The second objection is more subtle, but I think it too lacks cogency. Epicurus says self-sufficiency is 'a great good' (*Ep. Men.* 130), but he does not expect the wise to be completely invulnerable to fortune (ibid. 135). He recognizes that people need to come to terms with the loss of their friends (*Sent. Vat.* 66), and he also appears to say that a friend's disloyalty will totally confound the wise man's life (ibid. 56–7). Even if we take this counterfactually, the Epicurean wise man is not conceived, like his Stoic counterpart, as being completely impervious to fortune. His lasting happiness does depend upon certain minimum external provisions, a reasonably effective judicial system, and above all, friends. Without friends he would lack not only the best protection against external interference, but also the community that the pleasurable life requires.

Rather than have us identity the Epicurean motivations for friendship with *either* self-interest *or* altruism, Algra 2003, 281, proposes that Epicurean acts of friendship, in their mature form, are regarded as neither merely instrumental to one's own happiness nor as simply independent of one's own interests and preferences. He writes: 'The kind of community we are dealing with only concerns a *select* group of people with whom *we* happen to share a bond of community or appropriation. Moreover, we do not subordinate our own interests to theirs, but rather make *their* interests into our *own*.' That seems to me to be correct and in line with the position I have adopted in this study.

10

Lucretius on nature and the Epicurean self

I

The Epicurean self, ideally speaking, is a consistently trouble-free consciousness.[1] It does not suffer from anxiety about the gods or the causes of natural phenomena, and it is free from the pain of frustrated or immoderate desires. Because absence of pain *is* pleasure, these states of mind are pleasurable. The Epicurean self is not immune to all bodily pain, because some such pains are unavoidable experiences of being human. But the ideal Epicurean consciousness is so trouble-free that bodily pains, when they do occur, are more than counterbalanced by the uninterruptable continuity of a mind at peace with itself and with its tranquil recollections and anticipations, including even the anticipation of its own death.

Subjectivity, moment-by-moment consciousness, being at peace in the world, what it feels like to be securely happy—these are the fundamental starting-points and concerns of Epicureanism. As to the sources of the Epicurean's trouble-free subjectivity, these are, in essence, threefold: a like-minded community of mutually supportive friends, intelligence (*phronēsis*) in managing the hedonistic calculus for daily life, and atomistic science. The Epicurean self is both a unique individual with a unique set of experiences,

[1] Epicurus had a little to say about the anatomy of the soul (See Kerferd 1971 and Annas 1992) but not much by comparison with other leading philosophers. He was less interested in the causal workings and cognitive structure of the mind than in its subjective states—the pleasures and pains, the joys and anxieties that human beings, depending upon their beliefs and values and lifestyles, are subject to. The basic property of the self—of 'us'—according to Epicurus, is consciousness; note his focus on *aisthēsis* (*Ep. Hdt*. 64–5). Continuity of consciousness via memory is the foundation of our personal identity (Lucret. 3.847–69). Death is 'nothing to us' because it disrupts that continuity, and so brings 'us', the self that we are, to an end.

and the objective understanding of values and physical nature shared by fellow philosophers of the same persuasion.

   This chapter treats some of the ways in which Lucretius integrates, as I think he regularly seeks to do, the subjective and objective aspects of the Epicurean self. I say 'integrates' because there has been a tendency, which I find questionable, to regard Lucretius' objective voice as a register seriously at odds with his violent metaphors and alleged endorsement of a highly subjective view of nature.[2] The issue that interests me is not Lucretius' literary integrity or brilliance—that goes without saying—but his effectiveness as an Epicurean expositor and missionary. More generally, I should like to show that in seeking to come to terms with nature, Epicurus and Lucretius have a conception of the normative self that is thoroughly in line with the mainstream tradition of Greek philosophy.

II

To set the scene, I begin by considering two divergent interpretations of the Epicureans' psychology and recommended attitude to science—the earlier by Phillip De Lacy (1957) and the later by Martha Nussbaum (1994).

   According to De Lacy, the Epicurean cannot ground a meaningful life in natural events because the processes of the physical world, taken just by themselves, are totally valueless. Thus he writes: 'The sphere in which values do exist is limited by the fact that experience of pleasure and pain . . . is an immediate experience, a *pathos*, which requires simultaneous presence of the sentient being and that which affects him . . . In order to have meaning, events must happen at a time when the perceiving subject is capable of experiencing them; all else is valueless.' (p. 115). Because the processes of nature as such are meaningless and valueless, the Epicurean ethical agent detaches himself from the natural world by becoming a 'spectator', seeing things not 'subjectively' as values, but 'objectively' as processes, and so finds tranquillity:

He discovers the nature of himself and of the universe, and their relation to each other. Yet the understanding he thus acquires of all reality is accompanied by a detachment from that limited sphere of immediate experience within which values exist . . . It is this contrast between spectator and subject which produces a serious

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[2] The 'tension' between objective view and emotional involvement is a major theme in Segal 1990. I applaud his sensitive analysis, but find it insufficiently grounded in the structure of Lucretius' arguments; see my review in Long 1992*b*.

conflict in Epicurean ethics. It is necessary that we view the world as process, if we are to achieve peace of mind; yet it is necessary that we enter into the world of immediate experience if we are to find any values at all. The former course tends to make life empty; the latter imperils its tranquillity. (pp. 117–18)

For Lucretius, according to De Lacy, this cleavage 'posed an inescapable dilemma':

The exhortation to assume the role of spectator is a dominant theme of the *De Rerum Natura*; but along with it is a persistent tendency to portray the subjective side of experience, the pleasures and pains—especially the pains—that various kinds of event might produce in a sentient being. It is appropriate that Lucretius should do this, in order to point out the advantages of philosophical detachment; yet he does so at the risk of losing his own tranquillity (p. 114) . . . Lucretius tends to attach to the role of spectator a positive value which it does not properly have. To Epicurus knowledge is only a means . . . but to Lucretius knowledge is illumination (p. 121) . . . Lucretius is tempted to conceive of nature as aiding or opposing man [though he] knows better, of course. (p. 123)

Lucretius' tone and emphases do indeed differ, at times considerably, from those of Epicurus. Whether these differences make him a better or a worse Epicurean is a question I leave for later. But the dilemma De Lacy imputes to the Epicureans rests on a misunderstanding he has created by the way he sets up his dichotomy between process and value. It is not correct to say that: 'To have meaning events must happen' for an Epicurean 'at a time when the perceiving subject is capable of experiencing them.' This immediate subject-ivism was the position of the Cyrenaic hedonists, who disdained the study of physics, but it was firmly rejected by Epicurus.[3] In his ethics, by con-trast with theirs, pleasurable or untroubled memory and anticipation are cru-cial determinants of happiness. Human consciousness, according to Epicurus, does not require 'immediate experience' in order to be troubled or tranquil. Indeed, what troubles non-Epicureans and what tranquillizes members of the sect are beliefs of which the content is not directly perceptible or temporally

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[3] See DL 2.89 and 91 for the Cyrenaics, and for Epicurus' diagreement with them, DL 10.127; see also Cicero, *Tusc.* 5.95 (Usener 439) for pleasures of recollection and anticipation. De Lacy is, of course, aware of this doctrine (see his p. 117), so I am puzzled about his claim that for Epicurus 'the sphere in which values do exist . . . is an immediate experience'. According to Lucretius too (3.145) *id* (sc. *animus*) *sibi solum per se sapit, id sibi gaudet, cum neque res animam neque corpus commovet una*, which is hardly consistent with De Lacy's statement that experience of pleasure and pain 'requires simultaneous presence of the sentient being and that which affects him' (p. 115).

determinate—beliefs about the gods' relation to the world or a person's post-mortem condition, and so forth.

De Lacy's mistake about immediate subjectivism is compounded in his claim that the Epicurean, as spectator of natural events, is detached from 'that limited sphere of immediate experience within which all values exist'. If this were correct, an Epicurean could derive no pleasure or meaningfulness from science. Yet what Epicurus writes to Herodotus is that 'happiness rests upon the understanding of astral physics' (DL 10.78); and, at the beginning of the same letter, he tells his correspondent that 'continuous engagement with sci-ence is the main source of my life's tranquillity' (ibid. 37). 'Without science', he writes (*KD* 12), 'it is not possible to get pleasures that are uncontaminated.'

Pleasure as such does not depend upon science, but the pleasures constitu-tive of happiness do so depend. In acquiring an objective understanding of natural processes, an Epicurean satisfies his or her subjective desire for a rational explanation of the world, thus removing the pains of uncertainty and troubling beliefs. Why, then, does De Lacy insist that a cleavage between the sentient being and the valueless processes of the physical world presents Epicureanism with a dilemma? The answer he gives is that: 'unlike the Platonist or Stoic, the Epicurean does not find in nature any purposes or ends comparable to his own . . . The ethical agent, therefore, cannot identify himself with the natural world. He cannot accept and promote the cosmic order. He must stand apart, examining and testing all that comes his way, accepting little and rejecting much' (pp. 114–15). I don't think that either Platonic or Stoic teleology implied human identification with the natural world in quite the ways De Lacy seems to have in mind. Yet, even if he were right about that, it is unwarranted to infer that the Epicurean's non-teleological and non-anthropomorphic view of physical processes makes him stand apart from the natural world, accepting little and rejecting much. Lucretius is at great pains to show that human beings *are a part of the natural world*, and also that our well-being depends upon accepting nature as it is revealed by science. The fact that Epicurean nature taken abstractly is without value and purpose does not imply that natural processes have no value *relative to human understanding and to human goals*. Nor does the value-free status of nature, taken in the abstract, imply that human beings who take pleasure in a beautiful sunset or who hope to escape the disturbance of an earthquake are irrational by Epicurean criteria. De Lacy seems to think that the mindlessness of atoms situates human beings in a physical world they cannot accept in ways that are subjectively satisfying. But a moment's reflection will suffice to

show that we spend much of our lives deriving pleasure from things that are mindless and with which we do not identify.[4]

Epicurus was not an immediate subjectivist; nor was he a primitivist. In her fine book *The Therapy of Desire* (1994), Nussbaum makes much of passages in Sextus Empiricus, Diogenes Laertius, and Cicero which report Epicurus' reliance upon what Jacques Brunschwig (1986) has aptly christened 'the cradle argument'—the appeal to immediately post-natal behaviour as proof that pleasure and avoidance of pain are the ethical end. According to Nussbaum, this procedure implies 'that anything that cannot be seen and desired as good by the uncorrupted creature, using its untutored equipment, is not a part of the human end' (p. 109). She allows that:

A certain sort of reasoning, too, is included as part of the end: for a complete paralysis of mental functioning would surely be a grave impediment or disturbance for a human creature. But what apparently would not be a part of the end would be any specialized or socially tutored use of reason, anything beyond its healthy functioning as a faculty of the human animal. This ordinary use . . . is closely tied to bodily functions and usually would consist of awareness of and planning for bodily states. (ibid.)

Nussbaum's Epicurus (at least in this part of her book) has strong traces of primitivism:[5] he looks to 'the uncorrupted creature [that], at some level [is] what we are' (p. 108) because he is primarily interested in our bodily well-being. Indeed, she helps Epicurus to achieve this focus by omitting 'the soul' from her translation (ibid.) of *Letter to Menoeceus* 128, where Epicurus writes about the absence of anything lacking to fulfilment of the good of *the soul and* the body. 'Epicurus finds truth in the body', she writes (p. 110), and she limits 'the pleasures of the mind that have more than instrumental value . . . to forms of awareness of bodily functioning' (p. 109 n. 11).

Insisting 'that what all argument *is*, in this community, is therapy' (p. 127), Nussbaum leaves no room for the Epicurean self to derive any intrinsic pleasure from aesthetics or science, or to have any intellectual curiosity that is not therapeutic in motivation. On her interpretation of Epicureanism:

It would be a serious mistake to think that the school was especially scientific or given to the dispassionate study of nature for its own sake . . . There seems to have been no

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[4] At Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.41 (Usener 67) Epicurus is said to include listening to music and observing beautiful sights as sources of pleasurable motions.

[5] In her ch. 7, where she discusses Lucretius book 5, she rightly resists a progressivist or a primitivist reading of the Epicurean history of civilization.

attempt to test [its physical theory] against observed nature with an open mind in the Aristotelian way . . . Epicurean philosophy is value-relative through and through. All truths must support its view of happiness. (p. 124)

Nussbaum, then, avoids De Lacy's dilemma, which pins the Epicurean between the horns of subjective evaluator and objective spectator. But she avoids it at the cost of claiming that: 'It is probable that Epicurus would not have taken the katastematic pleasure of the soul to include elaborate philosophizing, or indeed, much more than happy memory and awareness of bodily health' (p. 111 n. 13). This observation does not fit the following assessment of the pleasure an Epicurean is expected to derive from philosophy (*Sent. Vat.* 27): 'In other pursuits the reward comes at the end and is hard won. But in philosophy enjoyment keeps pace with knowledge. It is not learning followed by entertainment, but learning and entertainment at the same time.'

At stake in these divergent interpretations by Nussbaum and De Lacy are the texture of the Epicurean self and the measure of its interest in rationality and objectivity. De Lacy's Epicurean seeks to be a dispassionate spectator of nature, but what that spectator sees cannot satisfy his subjective desires and quest for a meaningful life. For Nussbaum, science is therapeutically useful to the Epicurean, but the objectivity of this science is questionable because the truths it delivers are ones that fit Epicurean ethics so neatly. In arriving at this position, Nussbaum has made too much of those Epicurean slogans that are deliberately and polemically anti-intellectualist. Ancient critics of the Garden also took these entirely at face value, and by doing so neglected the tough reasoning that Epicurus actually engaged in. The pleasures of philosophy, as I have already said, appear to be intrinsic for Epicurus as well as instrumental. It is true, as Nussbaum says, that: 'A science of nature that delivered disturbing rather than calming stories of how things are would not have fulfilled the purpose for which we [i.e. Epicureans] need a science of nature' (p. 124). But it does not follow from this that Epicurus decided, in advance of reflection, that the relevant science had to be atomistic. He may have begun his scientific investigations with an open mind concerning the ultimate truths but with a strong commitment to the thesis that *rational* explanation of natural processes and the human condition, whatever its details and wherever it leads, will suffice to assuage anxiety about the arbitrariness of phenomena and divine intervention in the world.

That proposal is speculative, but the speculation is not idle. First, notwithstanding its distinctively urgent message, Epicureanism assumes as strongly

as any ancient philosophy that false and troubling beliefs can be subverted by compelling argument and evidence. Epicurus is an optimistic rationalist. Second, he is entirely in line with the mainstream tradition of ancient philosophy in presuming that an objective understanding of the world is crucial to happiness. I also think, however, that his therapeutic mission sometimes led him to give pithy formulations of his philosophy which give superficial substance to Nussbaum's interpretation. Lucretius, I shall now argue, can help us to set the record straighter in this regard.

III

According to Cicero, 'Epicurus believed that the mind can obey reason and follow its lead' (*Tusc.* 3.33). Actually *logos* and its derivative words are not particularly common in Epicurus' extant remains, but there are about 200 occurrences of *ratio* in Lucretius. In his diagnosis of the human condition, it is 'ignorance of causes' that 'forces' people to attribute celestial motions to the gods' domain (6.54–5). Lucretius' primeval human beings were not interested in causality (5.972–81); it is later people who have wanted to know the *ratio* of natural phenomena (cf. 5.1183–5). Superstition, as Lucretius regards it, is not complete absence of reason, but is rather 'poverty of reasoning' (*rationis egestas*, 5.1211); it shows human beings seeking explanations for things that puzzle and trouble them, and getting the explanation hopelessly wrong. The Epicurean self, he assumes, or indeed any self, wants to know why things are thus and so.

Lucretius' antidote for superstition is 'true reason' (*vera ratio*), or the *reasoning* whose truthfulness he implies by coupling it with 'the evidence of nature' (*naturae species*). If ignorance of causes compels people to misunderstand the world, true reasoning or the nature of things as such (*natura rerum*) is both 'compulsive' (1.498) and enlightening. When we are reasoning correctly about the world, Lucretius indicates that there is no gap between ourselves and nature because *natura* signifies both the way things are, in general and particular, and also the causal system which accounts to us for the way things are. The first of these uses—signifying the general and particular way things are—is ubiquitous in Epicurus, but he does not write about nature 'doing' things; he has no expression which clearly corresponds to Lucretius' *naturae species* or 'laws of nature' (*foedera naturae*). He does

not personify *physis* by making it the subject of verbs, as Lucretius does with *dissoluat*, *patitur*, *reficit*, *tribuit*, and *cogit*.[6]

Some scholars regard Lucretius' distinctive uses of *natura* as concessions to his poetic muse. It would certainly be quite mistaken to treat his vivid personifications, in expressions like *natura creatrix* (1.629, 2.1117, 5.1360), as hypostatizing nature or treating nature as an autonomous creative agent. No careful reader of his poem could suppose that he regards *natura* as a primary entity in itself to be set alongside atoms and space. But it seems to me no less mistaken to resist a scientifically exact interpretation of his formula *foedera naturae*. In the macroscopic world things are seen to conform to definite causal laws, both in the domain of biology and in the cycle of large-scale events. Lucretius insists on this and provides evidence for it throughout his poem. Having illustrated the determinate principle (*certa ratio*), that all living things are generated from determinate seeds (*certa semina*), he writes: 'Do not think that only animals are held by these laws (*legibus*), for the same principle (*ratio*) bounds (*terminat*) all things' (2.719). In the introduction of the sixth book he continues to remind his readers that superstition stems from the ignorance of 'what can be and what cannot be, that is to say, the rationale (*ratio*) which limits the power of each thing and gives it its firmly set boundary' (6.64–6, which repeats 5.88–90).

The *foedera naturae*, notwithstanding some scholarly denials, are 'laws of nature'.[7] They are Lucretius' way of naming the fact that the external world, or at least *our* external world, is a causal system of things conforming to predictable patterns and not happening randomly and inexplicably. *Natura* acts 'of its own accord' (*sua sponte*, 2.1059, 1092), and as such needs no controlling mind; but its *foedera* are irrefragable.[8] In order to be liberated from the bonds of ignorance, the Epicurean self of Lucretius recognizes and accepts the 'laws' of nature.

Epicurus does not write this way. That is one reason why many scholars have been reluctant to take the measure of Lucretius' law-governed world at face value. Another reason, of course, is the widespread belief that Epicurus,

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[6] On the striking differences between Epicurus' and Lucretius' references to nature, see Clay 1983, 87–95.

[7] See Chapter 8 of this volume, p. 172.

[8] Note the association between the *foedus*, 'by which all things are created', and the necessity of all things to 'persist' therein, 'and have no power to annul time's powerful laws' (*nec validas valeant aevi rescindere leges*), 5.55–8.

and so presumably Lucretius too, allowed for a basic contingency in the natural events that we experience. In Chapter 8 I have said why I reject that interpretation. If I am right, Epicurus was as convinced as Lucretius that chance has no role to play in nature's causality. What requires scholarly explanation, in that case, is why Epicurus, according to our evidence of his writings, did not anticipate Lucretius in persistently emphasizing the law-like authority and exceptionless regularity of nature's workings.

One reason, I am convinced, has to do with challenges the school faced after the death of Epicurus, especially from Stoics. A stock charge that Stoics brought against the Epicureans was their inability to account for cosmic order and for the evidence that they themselves found suggestive of superhuman, intelligent design.[9] The formulation of nature as law-governed or law-governing was often explicitly stated in accounts of Stoic physics, and what it primarily signified, when its mentalist and deistic connotations are removed, was causality—the operation of the *pneuma* that makes the world an interconnected and dynamic structure.[10]

What Lucretius showed—and it is his greatest scientific achievement—was that nature can be an intelligible causal system, as the Stoics proposed, without involving any mind or purpose.[11] The emphasis of the point I am making turns on the word 'system'. By dwelling so constantly on the agency and law-like character of *natura*, Lucretius gestures his acknowledgement of Stoic *physis*, and turns it to his own account. Like the Stoics, he puts nature in charge of the world, but Lucretius' *natura*, though its *majesty* is scarcely capable of being adequately sung (5.1–2), is not divine.

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[9] For Stoics' 'amazement' at the Epicureans' belief in a fortuitous and mechanistic cosmology, see Cicero, *ND* 2.93–4, and for similar comments, without naming the Epicureans, cf. Seneca, *Prov.* 2–4.

[10] In the draft of this paper that I read at the Lucretius conference I described the formulation as 'axiomatic'. That may be too strong, as David Sedley remarked, and he is certainly right to point out that 'natural law' (either in Greek or in Latin Stoic contexts) often refers to morality rather than causality. However, there can be no doubt, in my opinion, that Stoics were strongly associated with the concept of the world as a law-like system. Cleanthes had authorized such a doctrine in his *Hymn to Zeus*, where the supreme divinity governs every thing 'with law', and the cosmos in general is represented as obedient to 'universal law'. The concept of the world as a system 'governed' by nature is frequent in Cicero, *ND* 2 (cf. secs. 75, 77, 82). As for 'law' explicitly, in Latin contexts of Stoic causality, cf. Seneca, *Prov.* 2, on the *aeternae legis imperio* governing the heavens; Lucan 2.9–10, *fixit in aeternum causas, qua cuncta coercet se quoque lege tenens*; Manilius 1.778–9 *nec quicquam in tanta magis est mirabile mole quam ratio et certis quod legibus omnia paret*.

[11] Cf. Carneades' critique of Stoic deism in Cicero, *ND* 2.21–8, *Acad.* 2.121, Sextus Emp., *M* 9. 108, and see Chapter 6 of this volume.

IV

Much of Lucretius' treatment of *natura* is explicable as an Epicurean response to Stoic challenges and terminology in the sphere of causality. I think his formulations also have a further purpose, to which the general tradition of Greek philosophy, and especially Stoicism, have contributed. That purpose is repeatedly to underline the fact that human nature is so much a part of general nature, nature as causal system, that we need to *internalize* nature's truths and integrate them with our mind-set in order to live well.[12] The objective view of things, according to this proposition, is essential to an enlightened mentality and to our subjective flourishing.

We may begin to see the force of this point by noting how Lucretius frequently alerts his readers to their causal tie to nature. Early in book 1, before any science has commenced, we are told that Lucretius' theme includes the *rerum primordia* from which 'nature generates all things and increases and nurtures them, and into which again the same nature unlooses them when they are destroyed' (1.55–7). As he states in 2.75–9, 'The sum of things is always being renewed, and mortals interchange their lives, passing the torch on to one another, like runners in a race'. There is, as he observes in the middle of the book (2.569–80), a prevailing balance between 'destructive' and 'creative motions'; funerals and births are interrelated events in this process. Towards the end of the same book, before treating of our world's eventual end, he comments again on nature's regular cycle—from earth to earth, from inanimate to animate and back again (2.991–1012). This law of nature reaches its climactic formulation in the great personification of *Natura* near the end of book 3 (931–49). There, rebuking the person terrified of mortality, Nature proclaims (Bailey's translation):

The old ever gives place to the new, thrust out by new things, and one thing must be restored at the expense of others . . . There must needs be substance that the generations to come may grow; yet all of them will follow you, when they have had their fill of life . . . So one thing shall never cease to rise up out of another, and life is granted to none for freehold, to all on lease.

If this is consolatory, as it is intended to be, the basis of the consolation is the universality of nature's causal laws in regard to life and death. None of us can

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[12] For an excellent treatment of 'internalizing' Epicurean truths, so that they become 'second nature', especially by memorization, cf. Clay 1983, 176–85.

escape those laws, because we are all tied to nature as products of its generative and destructive motions (*motus genitales* and *exitiales*). We are *parts* of nature.

Lucretius and we have heard thoughts related to these before, and in language that Lucretius echoes. The mutual interchange of elements and its biological consequences were first adumbrated by Heraclitus, and then more fully by Empedocles. Officially Lucretius praised Empedocles and disparaged Heraclitus, but he was actually indebted to both these predecessors. Much could be said about echoes of Heraclitean flux in Lucretius. I allude to Heraclitus here in order to make a more general point. It was Heraclitus, to the best of our knowledge, who pioneered the thesis that human beings cannot live well if they simply retreat into a private world. In explaining the nature of things, as he laid claim to doing, Heraclitus saw himself as waking his audience up to facts that pertain to everyone commonly—facts about living and dying, and the relation between identity and change. Like Lucretius, Heraclitus often juxtaposes a macroscopic view of things—the way things appear from a non-anthropomorphic perspective—with ordinary human viewpoints. Heraclitus' purpose in doing so was not, I think, to cast doubt on the propriety of *all* conventional attitudes to life, but rather to show how they can be informed and clarified and improved when we also adopt a decentred and objective outlook on our position in the world. We can only live with full authenticity, he suggests, by coming to terms with nature and by integrating knowledge of nature's procedures with our subjective identity.[13]

The mainstream tradition of Greek philosophy, *mutatis mutandis*, endorsed this position. It is presumed by Parmenides and Empedocles, and accepted by Plato and Aristotle. Socrates was a dissenter, according to the doxographical tradition on him;[14] so too were the Cyrenaics (DL 2.92) and, for obvious reasons, the sceptics. But the testimony for Pyrrho actually supports my point. For according to Timon's account of Pyrrho, the first question someone who wants to be happy should ask is: 'How are things by nature?' The next question, the first having been settled, is: 'What attitude should we adopt to things?', and the third: 'What will be the outcome for those who have this attitude?'[15] Pyrrho's programme of questions was probably known to Epicurus (cf. DL 9.64) who, in any case, would have agreed with the pertinence of the questions as distinct from Pyrrho's answers

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[13] For a study of Heraclitus along these lines, see Long 1992*a*.

[14] For the evidence on this, apart from Plato, see Long 1996/2001, 1–6.

[15] See Aristocles, ap. Euseb. *Pr. ev.* 14.18.17 = LS 1F: Aristocles' report of what Timon said about Pyrrho's philosophy, on which see Chapter 3, p. 54.

to them. Most philosophers, unlike Pyrrho, thought that they could give definite and demonstrable answers to the question of how things are by nature, and that accommodating oneself to nature, as so disclosed, was the proper policy for anyone interested in a rational foundation for happiness.

The Stoics, of course, are the school of philosophers who articulated this position most explicitly by making 'agreement with nature' their formulation of life's goal (*telos*). Because Stoic 'nature' (*physis*) makes reference to a divine mind immanent in everything, the implications of their *telos* may seem to be radically at odds with Epicureanism. That is certainly true with reference to the rational, providential, and teleological properties of the Stoics' cosmic *physis*. These properties persuade the Stoic, unlike the Epicurean, that natural events should be accepted as being for the best and divinely mandated. But, as we have already seen, the Stoics' cosmic *physis* also signifies natural causation. A Stoic lives in agreement with cosmic nature by virtue of understanding and assenting to the way things happen in the world, by 'living in accordance with experience of natural events' in Chrysippus' formulation (DL 7.87).

It would be difficult to find a better expression than this to describe the 'rationale of life' (*vitae ratio*) that Lucretius praises Epicurus for discovering. As a good Epicurean, Lucretius will not go along with the Stoics in supposing that natural events are for the best; his message is that we need to understand and live in agreement with nature not because nature does things well, but simply because nature's way of doing things is the way things are and thus constitutes the essential facts and truth. The grasp of nature's causality underpins our happiness because it teaches us the possibilities and limitations of living in the world as it really is, understanding what can be and cannot be, what it is reasonable and in our power to do and plan for, and what, on the other hand, is irrational and out of step with the way things are.

In the proem of book 5, as he prepares to discourse on cosmology, biology, and anthropology, Lucretius couples eulogy of *natura* with eulogy of Epicurus: 'Who is able with mighty mind to build a song worthy of the majesty of these things and these findings? . . . For if we should speak, in the way that the discovered majesty of these things actually requires, he was a god, noble Memmius.' In these lines Lucretius twice refers to *rerum maiestas*. Bailey (1947) translates this expression by 'the majesty of truth', Smith in the Loeb edition (1975) by 'the majesty of nature'. In his commentary Bailey comes closer to Smith's rendering, because he explains the expression as 'the greatness of the world', but 'greatness' is much too flat for rendering the marked noun *maiestas*, with its divine and regal connotations. Lucretius often uses *res*

as a plain alternative to *natura*, and I think Smith is right to render *rerum* here by 'nature'. Epicurus' discoveries have revealed that nature, and no god of superstition or philosophers' demiurge, is in charge of the world.

In the proem to book 4 Lucretius justifies his poetic medium by asserting that Epicurean cosmology often seems somewhat *tristior* to those who have not familiarized themselves with it, and that people in general recoil from it. The description of Epicureanism as *tristior*, 'too austere' or 'too stern', reminds us that 'tomorrow we die' is the sequel to 'eat, drink, and be merry'. If Diskin Clay goes too far in writing of the 'grim character' of Lucretius' philosophy (1983, 232), his exaggeration has the merit of signalling Lucretius' ruthless determination to make his readers face the facts of nature as they really are. Even students of Epicureanism, Lucretius observes, fall back into the old superstitions (cf. 1.102, 5.82, 6.58). Although he attributes this to the machinations of priests and to the students' continuing puzzlement about celestial events, we may suppose that many people found religion or Stoicism more comforting as a creed to which they could anchor themselves.

To which Lucretius will reply, as he does after the passage about honeying the medicine: 'Wait till you perceive the entire nature of things and become fully conscious of its utility' (*dum percipis omnem naturam rerum ac persentis utilitatem*, 4.24–5). What Lucretius surely means by *persentis utilitatem* is 'your becoming fully conscious of the utility of understanding nature', just as he tells Memmius that what he will learn will be useful to him (1.331, 3.207); but he explicitly credits *natura* here with utility just as, in the next book, he credits nature or *res* with majesty. I think there are two interrelated explanations for the eulogies of nature in these contexts.

Natura is objective reality, but, as I have already said, it is not real in the way that atoms, void, and atomic compounds are real. *Natura* is scientific reality, reality reduced to causal system, reality as the object of rational understanding. As such, *natura* is scarcely distinguishable for Lucretius from science itself, as instantiated in the mind of Epicurus. As Waszink put it, 'nature itself has arisen from' that mind.[16] Epicurus was its *inventor* (3.9). In the proem to book 5 Lucretius indicates there is no gap between *natura* as the objective way of things and Epicurus' discoveries (*reperta*). By discovering *natura*, by proceeding beyond 'the world's fortifications' (*moenia mundi*) out into 'nature's furthest reaches' (*ultima naturae*, 1.1116) and returning to tell the tale, Epicurus has made it possible for those who follow his guidance to internalize

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[16] See Waszink 1949, with further discussion by Schrijvers 1970, 63–4.

nature and so allow the truths it encompasses to be useful in ordering their lives.

That is one explanation for Lucretius' praise of nature in these important prooemia. It is consistent with and contributory to a further explanation, which involves Lucretius' attitude to Stoicism. As I have been suggesting, Lucretius' focus on nature is strongly redolent of Stoic *physis* stripped of its mentalist and deistic trappings. The *foedera naturae* echo Stoic causality. What is too grim (*tristis*) for a good many people is a philosophy of life which requires them to be self-conscious about living within the limits of human nature, and to drop any illusions that natural phenomena have an interest in benefiting or harming them. The intrinsic goods and evils of Lucretius' Epicureans are just as internal to their consciousness and to their minds' autonomy as are those of a Stoic. Lucretius, then, I am suggesting, gives Epicurean substance to the life that the Stoics called 'agreement with nature' or 'living according to experience of natural events'. His version of Epicureanism takes this much of Stoicism into account, and makes it consistent with the Garden's hedonistic starting-points and its demythologized conception of nature.

V

Lucretius' relation to Stoicism is a very complex and controversial topic. Rather than pursue it in detail here, I register agreement with those who find the Stoics implied opponents at the beginning of book 5, where Lucretius eulogizes Epicurus for his incomparably important discoveries.[17] The promotion of Epicurus' achievement above the deeds of Hercules is not necessarily a dig at the Stoics, because those philosophers hardly took the myths about Hercules as seriously as some believe.[18] What persuades me that Lucretius is outdoing the Stoics here is first his treatment of Epicurus as the paragon of wisdom—as in fact the discoverer of *sapientia* (true philosophy in other words)—and second, his words about the ethical consequences of a mind purged by Epicurus' medicine. The Stoics notoriously denied that any

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[17] As suggested by Schmidt 1990, 170–81, in disagreement with Furley 1966, 30–1. Sedley 1998, 91–2, offers nuanced support for Furley's view that the Stoics were never Lucretius' intended target. To this I briefly respond that if Lucretius were quite unaware that parts of his poem could be construed as anti-Stoic (or, better, as countering and outdoing Stoicism), he would have to have been remarkably insulated from his immediate culture.

[18] See the balanced remarks of Gale 1994, 35–6.

of their own leading philosophers had actually attained wisdom, an admission that their critics used against them, as I conjecture that Lucretius implicitly does here. By praising Epicurus so extravagantly, Lucretius indicates that an Epicurean self is not a virtually unattainable ideal, but a real possibility for anyone capable of adopting the master's 'philosophy of life' (*vitae ratio*). Against the Epicureans, it was regularly objected, especially by Stoics, that their hedonism was incompatible with the traditional moral virtues. Contrasting Hercules' battles in the outer world with the Epicurean's purged mind, Lucretius treats the latter as the necessary and sufficient condition not only of an untroubled consciousness, but also as the antidote to *superbia*, *spurcitia*, *petulantia*, *luxus*, and *desidiae* (5.47–9)—arrogance, obscene lust, crudeness, luxury, and sloth.

Allow all these words their strongly negative associations in Roman elite ideology, and you see that Lucretius is formulating the benefits of Epicurean science in a way that enables him to defeat the Stoics on their own ground. He is advocating Epicureanism as the basis for a gamut of the Stoic virtues that resonated well at Rome—modesty, self-control especially in sexuality, hardiness, energetic behaviour, and frugality. A moment later Lucretius undermines the calumny (surely voiced by Stoics) of Epicurus' impiety: the great man, he says, was accustomed to pronounce well and at length on the immortal gods themselves. The opening of book 5, then, should be regarded as including an offensive and defensive series of gestures at Stoicism.

And not just the opening of book 5; for, as Hardie observes (1986, 18): 'Lucretius is an efficient predator, who digests those parts of his victim which are beneficial to his system and ostentatiously rejects the indigestible.' One sign of this, which has been thoroughly explored by Gale (1994), is his manner of treating myths as 'symbolic answers to questions now answered by Epicurus'. Lucretius does not detect cosmological truth in myths, as the Stoics did, but he is at one with them in regarding these traditions as anthropological and epistemological data which cannot be dismissed out of hand. Further signs of Lucretius' digestive practice have been detected in the poet's account of social solidarity as a seemingly natural development from the experience of family life and child-raising (5.1011–27). If, as has been suggested, Lucretius has adapted the Stoic concept of social appropriation (*oikeiōsis*), he was not being significantly eclectic;[19] for Epicurus had already prepared the way

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[19] See Pigeaud 1983, 138–41, whose detection of an allusion to Stoicism has been supported in an (as yet) unpublished paper by Piet Schrijvers.

by linking *oikeion* to *physis* in his treatment of our natural good and interest in self-preservation (cf. *KD* 7). But Lucretius' terminology, especially his use of the verb *commendare* (line 1021), reads like a Stoicizing allusion he has no interest in disguising.[20]

Doctrinal integrity had enabled the Hellenistic schools to establish very distinct identities and to present themselves as mutually exclusive choices or *haireseis*.[21] You could not combine Stoicism with Epicureanism, and Lucretius' doctrinal loyalty is perspicuous. Yet, as the Academic Carneades showed (Cicero, *Fin.* 5.16–20), it was reasonable to treat the competing theories of the *summum bonum* as similar in their appeals to the *natural* attraction of the goods that happiness requires.

The choice between Stoic virtue and Epicurean pleasure was indeed radical, and it presupposed radically different conceptions of what human and cosmic nature require us to do in order to be happy. But the technologies of the self that both philosophies profess, the tranquillity they promise, the objective understanding of life's limits and nature's processes—all of these are strikingly similar. When Seneca and Marcus Aurelius cite Epicurus approvingly, as they sometimes do, we should see this not as an instance of Roman fuzziness, but as a clear-headed acknowledgement of the points I have just made.[22]

Marcus Aurelius had doubtless read Lucretius. But he did not need to do so in order to pen Stoic reflections that echo the Epicurean poet very closely. Consider the following selection from the *Meditations*: 'As do changes in the elements, so changes in their compounds preserve the ordered universe' (2.3). 'How swiftly all things vanish' (2.12). 'Even if you were to live three thousand years . . . remember that no one can shed another life than this which he is living . . . so that the longest and the shortest life come to the same thing' (2.14). 'All that exists is in a sense the seed of what will be born from it' (4.36). 'Birth is a joining together of the same elements into which the other is a dissolving' (4.5). And most strikingly: 'Either all proceeds from one intelligent source . . . or there are atoms and there is nothing but a medley and dispersion. Why then be troubled?' (9.39). In this last citation Marcus juxtaposes and contrasts Stoic and Epicurean cosmologies, but he treats both alike as positioning us in a world that does not justify anxiety.

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[20] Cicero (*Fin.* 3.63) renders the process of social *oikeiosis* by *commendatio*.

[21] I develop the points of this and the next paragraph in the first two chapters of this book.

[22] Cf. especially Seneca's approval of Epicurus for making 'enslavement' to philosophy the basis for freedom, *Ep.* 8.7. For Marcus Aurelius, see 7.64, 9.41.

The congruence between Marcus' reflections and Lucretius underlines my central point. If, as I have put it, Lucretius gestures in the direction of Stoicism, the result of his doing so is not a concession or a weakening of the Epicurean message but an indication that the divine founder's discoveries fortify the self with the kind of objective understanding also promised by Stoicism but without that philosophy's falsehoods about nature. This, to repeat, is not eclecticism or syncretism, but a highly intelligent presentation of Epicurean philosophy to a Roman audience rather familiar, as we may assume, with both the doctrines and the tone of contemporary Stoicism.

VI

In *The View from Nowhere* (1986) Tom Nagel coined the expression 'the objective self', which I borrowed in the opening remarks of this chapter. The expression has a deliberately paradoxical ring because selfhood, it may seem, is synonymous with subjectivity, meaning an essentially individual consciousness which is personal, private, and detachable from objective reality. Nagel acknowledges the essential subjectivity of our human identities, but he argues that subjectivity is not all that we are. We also have or are an objective self. This comes into operation when we try to think of the world from a perspective in which we treat our personal identity not as a privileged viewpoint but merely as one of the things that the world contains along with everything else. We manifest our objective selves in numerous activities involving appeals to evidence and verification. Without this capacity we would not be able to engage in science or achieve any intersubjective understanding.

From Heraclitus onward, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Long 1992*a*), ancient philosophers attempted to improve people's consciousness and capacity to live well by asking them to cultivate their objective selves, that is, to allow the study of nature to become a perspective for understanding their place in the world and for ameliorating their values and passions and personal concerns. Epicurus gave his own slant to this because he focused so strongly on fear of divine control and fear of death, but his therapeutic strategy—the study and appropriation of nature's truths—had already been Plato's message in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*. Epicurus was neither a body-centred primitivist nor an immediate subjectivist, as I showed in my opening discussion of Nussbaum and De Lacy. He was an optimistic rationalist but, to judge from our extant record, his optimism sometimes degenerated into pithy

slogans, which are too superficial to register the difficulty of looking at one's life objectively even if tranquillity is the reward for doing so.

The Stoics, whom Epicurus himself probably ignored, were also optimistic rationalists. In contrast with him they emphasized the extreme difficulty of achieving a consistently rational consciousness. Lucretius, I think, also took this point. There are many different ways of interpreting his tendency to vivify pain and suffering. I am most attracted by those who see this tendency as a test and protreptic for the Epicurean novice, especially in the horrific treatment of the Athenian plague at the end of book 6—a test to balance the optimism of Epicurean objectivity against the irremovable predicaments of human existence, and to remain convinced that the optimism is still justified.[23]

In Nagel's book, balancing subjectivity and objectivity is treated as a task fundamental to being authentically human. The author himself is pessimistic about how far a fully integrated attitude can be achieved. In his final chapter, on death, he writes:

Of course from the objective standpoint the existence or nonexistence of any particular objective self, including this one, is unimportant. The objective viewpoint may try to cultivate an indifference to its own annihilation, but there will be something false about it: the individual attachment to life will force its way back even at this level. Here, for once, the objective self is not in a position of safety. (1986, 231)

And at another point (p. 223): 'It is better to be simultaneously engaged and detached, and therefore absurd, for this is the opposite of self-denial and the result is full awareness.' In another book, *Mortal Questions* (1979), Nagel discusses Lucretius' attempt to prove that death is nothing to us, and finds it wanting. Perhaps if he had studied Lucretius in entirety he would have recognized a kindred spirit in virtue of the Epicurean poet's brilliance in juxtaposing pathos, joy, and scientific detachment. With the help of Nagel's *View from Nowhere*, we can see Lucretius' alternations and negotiations between detachment and engagement in a very different light from De Lacy (1957), not as signs of a peculiarly Epicurean dilemma but as indications of the poet's awareness of what Hilary Putnam (1987) has aptly called 'the many faces of realism'—the fact, that is to say, that thoughts and feelings are as much a part of reality as are atomic particles.

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[23] See Clay 1983, 266, and Gale 1994, 228.

The self that the poet presents and that he invites us to replicate is scrupulously Epicurean, but its consciousness has a breadth and empathy which we tend to miss in the surviving words of the school's founder. Lucretius' poetic genius is a primary factor here. If I am right, he was also inspired by the wish to make Epicureanism an intellectual and emotional challenge for would-be Stoics, and also for anyone who had found the Garden's philosophical orientation too limited to do justice to the complexity of human consciousness.

PART IV

EARLY STOICISM

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11

Zeno's epistemology and Plato's *Theaetetus*

I

The Stoic Zeno's most famous and most contested doctrine was the *kataleptic* or 'cognitive' impression (*phantasia katalēptikē*, hereafter KP). In its mature formulation, the doctrine maintains that human beings experience a type of mental impression, primarily mediated by the senses but also extending to non-sensory thoughts, that represents some fact or truth in a manner such that the item represented *could not* be false. Zeno acknowledged that our experience may include false impressions and also impressions whose truth is not self-evident or incontrovertible. As quite distinct from these types of impression, he postulated the occurrence of the KP, and nominated it as his 'criterion of truth'.[1] The Academic Arcesilaus, Zeno's younger contemporary by some eighteen years, vigorously opposed the KP. His challenges to the doctrine were probably a principal reason why he adopted suspension of judgement (*epochē*) about everything as the trademark of the Academy under his headship, initiating 200 years of dispute between the Stoics and the Academics over the criterion of truth.[2]

[1] For the basic evidence and discussion, see LS, chs. 39–40. The best modern treatments are Frede 1983 and Sedley 2002*b*.

[2] For Arcesilaus' dispute with Zeno, see esp. Cicero, *Acad.* 2.77–8 = LS 40D. It is treated at length, but more imaginatively than historically, by the late Platonist, Numenius: see Numenius, fr. 25 Des Places = Eusebius, *PE* 14.5.10–6.14. That Zeno actually debated in person with Arcesilaus may well be true. However, the Stoic against whom Diogenes Laertius pits Arcesilaus is Zeno's deviant follower Aristo; see Chapter 5 above.

Both Zeno and Arcesilaus had been pupils (almost certainly at different times) of the Academic Polemo, whom Arcesilaus succeeded as head of the Academy after the brief tenure of Crates. By the time Zeno founded the Stoic school he was no Platonist. He firmly rejected Plato's theory of Forms, identifying universals with concepts, and he denied existence to anything incorporeal.[3] He also rejected the immortality of the soul.[4] Zeno's *Republic* too was strongly anti-Platonic in various respects.[5] But Zeno also made constructive use of much material from Plato's dialogues. We find him aligning himself directly with theses defended by Plato's Socrates, such as the unity of the virtues or the identity of virtue and knowledge; or adopting, as in his cosmology, a position with recognizable affinity to parts of Plato's *Timaeus*; or even appropriating from the *Sophist* (247d8–e4) 'acting or being acted upon' as the mark of what exists, making substantive use of a thesis designed to discomfit physicalists like himself.[6]

Quite apart from his complex relation to Plato, Zeno seems to have been unequivocal in his approval of the Socratic persona, as represented by Xenophon as well as by Plato.[7] Arcesilaus even more strongly aligned himself with Socrates, treating Socrates' disavowals of knowledge in Plato as the key to interpreting Plato himself.[8] When Arcesilaus opposed Zeno over the KP, we can be fairly confident that this was not simply a doctrinal disagreement. It was also motivated by Arcesilaus' general wish to detach Socrates and Plato from Zeno and from his upstart Stoa.

Arcesilaus attacked the KP by arguing against Zeno's claims for its intrinsically truth-revealing properties. In the transmitted form of the debate, Arcesilaus argued that for any putative KP an indistinguishable but false impression *could* exist. This criticism is perfectly telling and intelligible without reference to any objections Arcesilaus may have had about Zeno's relationship to Plato or Socrates. However, this latter was probably a further stimulus for Arcesilaus if, as I shall propose, Arcesilaus found Zeno recycling and meddling with material in Plato's *Theaetetus*, and interpreting the dialogue's findings positively rather than sceptically. My proposal in this chapter is that Zeno, in formulating his doctrine of the KP, drew a good deal on the *Theaetetus*, putting some of its substantive suggestions to work

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[3] Stobaeus 1.136, 21 ff. = LS 30A; Cicero, *Acad.* 1.39 = LS 45A.
[4] Augustine, *Contra Acad.* 3.38 = *SVF* 1.146.   [5] See LS vol. 1, p. 435.
[6] See LS vol. 1, pp. 271, 383–4, and Long 1988, 160–71.
[7] See Long 1988, Striker 1994, and De Filippo and Mitsis 1994.
[8] Cicero, *Acad.* 1.43–6 = LS 68A. See Long 1988 and Chapter 5 of this volume.

for himself in quite un-Platonic ways. If there is force to this proposal, most details of which are novel, it should cast light not only on Zeno's encounter with Arcesilaus but also on some of the thinking that led up to the KP.[9]

II

As reported by Cicero (*Acad.* 1.40–1 = LS 40B), Zeno's KP involved some 'new' ideas about 'the senses themselves', and some new terminology, especially words formed from the verb καταλαμβάνειν, which means 'to grasp'. Cicero cites καταληπτόν ('graspable'), which he renders by *comprehendibile*, and we are also to think of the neologisms, καταληπτικός ('grasping') and κατάληψις ('grasp', i.e. cognition), which became standard Stoic terms. To these we could add Zeno's probable coinage of συγκατάθεσις (Cicero's *adsensio*), meaning 'assent' (i.e. the mind's acceptance of the putative fact reported by an impression); but we should also note that the corresponding verb συγκατατίθεσθαι had already been used by Plato (*Gorg.* 501c5) and that καταλαμβάνειν occurs in an epistemic sense in Aristotle (*Top.* 5, 131a29, 31).[10]

The novelty of Zeno's KP, doctrinally and terminologically, is not in question. However, it is not absolute, nor does Cicero describe it as being so. For a start, the term *phantasia*, to describe sensory input (leaving aside the word's complex usage in Aristotle), is frequent in Zeno's older contemporary Epicurus. Much more important, however, for my argument, is the fact that *phantasia* was very deliberately used, and perhaps even coined, by Plato at that point in the *Theaetetus* where Socrates explicates Protagoras' man/measure doctrine in terms of how things 'appear' to each person.[11] Socrates secures Theaetetus' agreement to the following analysis: 'How something *appears to*

[9] Ioppolo 1990 anticipates my general assumption that Zeno knew and made use of the *Theaetetus*. However, she focuses only on the Wax Tablet model, and is less concerned with Zeno's creative use of Plato than with (as she proposes) Arcesilaus' reliance, in his criticism of Zeno, on Plato's refutation of the epistemic value of perception. See also Dillon 1993, 65, who mentions the use of τύπος in *Tht.* 192a4 as 'a passage which may itself have influenced the Stoics'. Striker 1996, 91 n. 22, finds it 'plausible' that 'Epicurus used Plato's arguments [in *Tht.*] against the cognitive value of sense perception in his own attempt to show its infallibility' and she notes (p. 36) Epicurus' use of epistemic terminology already found in this dialogue; but she says nothing about connecting it with Zeno.

[10] This reference is missed by Liddle/Scott/Jones, editors of the standard Greek–English Lexicon.

[11] *phantasia* in the plural is attested in some MSS at *Rep.* 2, 382e10 and generally accepted by editors, but even if that is the word's first occurrence the context lacks the emphasis of the *Theaetetus* passage.

each person is equivalent to how each person *perceives* that thing. Therefore *appearing* [i.e. having something appear to oneself] (*phantasia*) and *perceiving* it (*aisthēsis*) are the same' (152b10–c1). Much later in the dialogue, Socrates explains Protagoras' man/measure doctrine as supposing that 'a man has the *criterion* of [perceptible properties] *within* himself, and when he thinks that they are the way he is affected by them, he thinks what is true and real for himself' (178b5–7).

This is the earliest passage that makes 'the *perceptual* criterion of truth' an explicit notion.[12] We can hardly doubt that Plato's text was very familiar to Epicurus and Zeno, the two Hellenistic philosophers who made the criterion of truth a central concept, and who both sought to ground human access to ascertainable truths in perceptual information (*phantasia*). Neither of them, of course, was a relativist like Protagoras. Rather, they adapted his perceptual criterion, as so described by Plato, to a non-relative concept of truth, claiming that a *determinable* set of our perceptions ('the way one is affected by appearances') is criterial for true *objective* judgements.

This common ground between Zeno and Epicurus hardly points to any special dependence of Zeno on the *Theaetetus*. In view of Epicurus' notorious claim that 'all perceptions' (as distinct from all judgements) 'are true', his position looks, and indeed is, closer to Protagoras's than Zeno's KP.[13] The special and highly contestable feature of the KP is its supposedly self-evident truth content, which distinguishes it from all other perceptual information. Socrates' exploration of Protagoras' criterion could offer no help to Zeno on this crucial point, but the situation is different when we turn to the next part of the *Theaetetus* where the celebrated models of the Wax Tablet and the Aviary are set out.

III

In what was probably its original Zenonian definition the KP 'arises from what is, and is stamped *on* and imprinted *therefrom* in accordance with that very thing which is'.[14] Here too we read a Zenonian term: ἐναπομεμαγμένη,

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[12] Plato also uses *kritērion*, meaning 'faculty for judging truth' at *Rep.* 9, 582a6; cf. Striker 1996, 26.

[13] When Epicurus claims that 'all perceptions are true', he does not mean that they are all to be accepted as evidence for an object's *intrinsic* properties. In order to serve as the latter, their reports need to be directly attested or non-contested. See LS chs. 16–18.

[14] Sextus, *M* 7.248 = LS 40E; DL 7.46 = LS 40C. The italicized words in my translation seek to capture the double prepositional prefix ('ἐναπ(ο)) of the two participles. Its point is to indicate

'stamped on', from ἐναπομάσσομαι, and Zeno also used an apparently Epicurean neologism, ἐναπεσφραγισμένη, 'imprinted' (as from a seal) from ἐναποσφραγίζομαι.[15] This terminology clearly recalls the famous passage in which Socrates outlines the Wax Tablet model of the relationship between perception or thought, memory and knowledge (*Tht.* 191de).[16]

We are asked to imagine that our souls contain a block of wax. 'Whenever we want to remember something, among the things we see, hear, or think up by ourselves [i.e. independently of sensory input], we hold the wax under our perceptions and thoughts and take an impression from them (ἀποτυποῦσθαι), as if we were imprinting (ἐνσημαινομένους) the signs of signet-rings (δακτυλίων σημεῖα). Whatever is stamped (ἐκμαγῇ), we remember and know as long as its image (εἴδωλον) is present; but whatever is obliterated or cannot be stamped, we forget and do not know.'[17]

The purpose of Socrates' model is to explain how false judgements are possible. After eliminating numerous candidates for these, he concludes that we can make mistakes only in cases where we mismatch present perceptions with memory-imprints, that is, with things previously perceived or thought and hence already known.

According to this model, *knowledge* is assimilated to the retention of well-defined memory traces of items previously perceived or thought. The stamping, imprinting, and signing metaphors explain the mind's hold on such items. Socrates is not concerned with explaining what makes a

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that the veridical source (ἀπο) of the KP, stated in the first clause, is exactly represented in or on (ἐν) the impression. Bury in the Loeb trans. of Sextus is quite wrong to take the 'subject' (presumably he means the percipient) to be the recipient of the stamping.

    I omit the final clause, 'such as could not arise from what is not' (also omitted from DL 7.46 = LS 40C) because that is reported as an addition prompted by Arcesilaus' criticism of Zeno's original formula (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.77–8 = LS 40D). In that passage Zeno is credited by Cicero with a Latinized version of the Greek definition translated above: *ex eo quod esset, sicut esset, impressum et signatum et effictum.* Hence we can be virtually certain that the Greek definitions, though not explicitly assigned to Zeno, do derive from him.

[15] This word's first occurrence is almost certainly Epicurus, *Ep. Hdt.* 49, significantly in the context of rejecting various explanations of how external objects *impress* their colour and shape on us.

[16] Aristotle had already drawn on this passage in his own account of memory; see *De mem.* 1, 450a27–b1.

[17] Ioppolo 1990, 433, mentions only τύπωσις, which she calls 'Zeno's definition of presentation', as the verbal sign of Zeno's recalling the *Theaetetus*. Actually, the Stoic to whom this definition is explicitly accredited is Cleanthes (see below), but it is clearly implied to be Zenonian by Eusebius (*SVF* 1.141), who says that Zeno claimed the soul to be 'perceptive because its commanding part is capable of being imprinted (τυποῦσθαι), through the senses, from things that are, and to receive the imprints'; cf. Plato's ἀποτυποῦσθαι above.

perception or a thought veridical in the first place. His interest is entirely in the correspondence or lack of correspondence between a presumptively accurate stamp or memory of some empirical object (call this SEO) and the present perception or thought of the same empirical object (call this PEO). Thus, in the case of perceiving Theaetetus, we would be justified in saying that we know him (correctly recognize or identify him) on condition that we already have an SEO of Theaetetus and assign our PEO of him to that SEO.

Unlike the Wax Tablet, Zeno's KP does not rest on presumptions about the correspondence between a present percept and a pre-existing, cognitively accurate memory-stamp of the same empirical object.[18] Zeno's focus is on the question of what conditions simply concerning the *phantasia* of any object, as such, must be satisfied if we are to be justified in taking that impression to be incontrovertibly veridical. However, for Zeno as for Socrates, the relevant conditions also invoke the stamping and imprinting model, and they invoke it in an analogously relational way: the KP requires a qualifying impression to have the imprint or stamp of its *source object*. Let S now stand for the way the impression, as distinct from the memory, is stamped. Zeno wants to say that, in the case of seeing someone *as* Theaetetus we are justified in saying that our perception of him is veridical on condition that it has the clear and distinct S(tamp) of Theaetetus in his visual manifestation. Whereas the Wax Tablet deals with the relation between a present perception and its corresponding (or supposedly corresponding) memory-stamp, the KP deals with the relation between a present perception and the way it is incontrovertibly marked by its corresponding source-object.[19]

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[18] There are difficult questions about how the Stoics thought concepts (ἔννοιαι and προλήψεις) are involved in our recognition of objects represented by KPs. It seems obvious that I cannot have a KP of Theaetetus, such that I correctly identify some person as Theaetetus, unless I have prior acquaintance with him either directly or by description. Sphaerus (DL 7.177 = LS 40F) must have had a concept of pomegranates as a precondition of his mistaking Ptolemy's wax replica of them to be the real thing. Perhaps the Stoic idea is that KPs, by virtue of their intrinsic features, make us conceptualize their objects correctly, and that in the absence of the relevant concepts we could not have a corresponding KP. Plato's focus on memory and thought, then, in the Wax Tablet and the Aviary might have some relevance to Stoic epistemology. I shall not pursue that theme here, except to note that the 'imprinting' terminology of the Wax Tablet is replicated in some Stoic accounts of memory: see Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1085AB, together with other texts cited by Cherniss in his Loeb edition, *ad loc.*

[19] For good remarks on this, see Ioppolo 1990, 439, who suggests that Zeno adapted for the KP the Platonic cases, in the Wax Tablet context, where false judgement is impossible: e.g 'Thinking something one knows and perceives, having the memory-stamp in correct order, is something else one knows' (*Tht.* 192b6–7). Note especially her perceptive comment: 'Zeno could have thought that it is impossible to doubt the truthfulness of the perception if it faithfully reproduces the characteristics of the object impressing them directly onto the soul at the present moment.'

We have just seen why it is plausible to think that Zeno drew on the terminology as well as parts of the logic of the Wax Tablet.[20] There is more to be said. His close follower Cleanthes, as if drawing attention to the Wax Tablet passage, explained sensory 'printing' (τύπωσις)—recall Plato's use of ἀποτυποῦσθαι—as being 'like the printing of wax made by rings'.[21] Chrysippus rejected a literal interpretation of the 'seal' image;[22] but its metaphorical usage continued in later Stoicism as a model for the distinctiveness requisite to cognitive impressions.[23]

In addition to the Wax Tablet, we may find further echoes of the *Theaetetus* in the KP. The first two clauses of its definition state that a KP must be 'from what is (ὑπάρχοντος), and be stamped on and imprinted therefrom in accordance with that very thing which is' (κατ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον).[24] Here Zeno assigns the truth-reporting features of a KP to its derivation from and correspondence to what *exists* or *is the case*. Accounting for truth as correspondence of a testimony or statement to the way things 'are' was a well-established procedure; but if, as I am suggesting, Zeno had been mulling over the *Theaetetus* he will have noted Socrates' discussion (before the Wax Tablet is introduced) of the relation between being/not being and true/false judgement (*Tht.* 188d ff.), that is, the logical connection Plato postulates between being and truth. A KP is the criterion for judging what is true because it puts its percipient in touch with something that *is* (is true) in just the way it is perceived *to be*.

The terms κατάληψις, καταληπτικός, and καταληπτός, as we have seen, were Zenonian neologisms, but their root word (κατα)λαμβάνειν was current before, and it had long been used in its uncompounded form to signify the mental grasp of something. It may be noteworthy, however, that both in the Aviary model, which follows the Wax Tablet, and also in the final section of the *Theaetetus* (exploring 'true judgement together with an

[20] I am grateful to Rachel Barney for prompting me to note that, prior to Plato, Democritus had invoked 'imprinting' (ἐντύπωσις), likening it to 'moulding in wax', in his account of how 'the air between vision and its object is *compressed* by the object and that which sees' (Theophrastus, *De sensibus* 50–1 = DK 68A 135). The details of Democritus' theory have no direct bearing on Zeno or Plato, but his terminology shows that the τύπος image for sensory input was already current in the 5th century, and it is also found in Gorgias' *Helen*, DK 82B11, 13 and 15. Yet, even if Zeno knew these or other such texts, that hardly casts doubt on the likelihood that his primary text for adaptation was the *Theaetetus*.

[21] Sextus, *M* 7.228.

[22] Ibid. 7.229; DL 7.50 = LS 39A3.

[23] Sextus, *M* 7.251 = LS 40E6.

[24] Sextus, *M* 7.248 = LS 40E3. I follow Sedley 2002, 136, in my translation of κατ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον. His study should be consulted for subtle interpretation of details of the definition in its original Zenonian form.

account' (*logos*) as the definition of knowledge), Plato uses λαμβάνειν with this sense, and also compounds of λαμβάνειν and the virtually synonymous ἐφάπτεσθαι.²⁵ However, Plato doesn't use Zeno's special compound <u>καταλαμβάνειν</u>. Zeno's choice of only this word is clearly deliberate because for him what is mentally *grasped* is necessarily true. By contrast, Socrates' usage of the 'taking/getting hold of/grasping' metaphor ranges over falsehoods as well as truths. Here we may see Zeno deliberately correcting the *Theaetetus* by rejecting the idea that one could *apprehend* anything false.

The Aviary distinguishes between what someone already *possesses* (a piece of knowledge) and what a person subsequently *has* or *takes* or *gets hold of* from his or her stock of cognitive possessions. It accounts for false judgement as a case of seizing the wrong knowledge item out of one's knowledge repository, similarly to the mismatching invoked by the Wax Tablet. The Aviary too is unconcerned with how we come to know particular things in the first place, and thus far has no bearing on the definition of the KP. What it stimulated Zeno to come up with, I presume, was his 'apprehending' model for the mental condition of being incorrigibly in touch with some truth.

According to the Aviary, someone who successfully *gets hold of* the knowledge that is already *in himself* makes a true judgement (*Tht.* 199b). Zeno's KP, as we have seen, does not invoke pre-existing knowledge. What it requires, rather, is that someone get hold of the specific truth content stamped on cognitive impressions independently of any purely subjective contribution.

Plato comes closer to this Zenonian point when, after expounding the Aviary, Socrates explains his notion of 'true judgement together with an account' (*logos*). His third suggestion of what such a *logos* might be is a 'mark' (*sēmeion*) by which an item for investigation 'differs from everything else' (*Tht.* 208cd), such as the sun's being the brightest of all celestial bodies. Socrates then concludes:

If you grasp (λαμβάνῃς) the differentia that distinguishes one thing from everything else . . . you will grasp a *logos* of it. But as long as you make contact (ἐφάπτῃ) with something common, your *logos* will (only) be about those things to which this common property belongs . . . And whoever along with correct judgement about any real thing grasps in addition (προσλάβῃ) its difference from the rest will have become a knower of the thing he was an opiner of before.

An affinity between the KP and this Socratic proposal is patent. Stoics did not confine true impressions (or true judgements) to those which are cognitive.

The special feature of the KP, making it not only true but also cognitive, is its representing its object with an 'individual indication' (*propria declaratio*);[26] or, in the language of the later Stoic tradition, with a 'mark' (*nota*) that *could not* apply to anything other than the particular object it represents (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.84). Hence the special epistemic status of the KP. The issue of whether a unique differentia is perceptually graspable as distinct from properties shared by a plurality of things would become the principal point of contention between the Stoics and their Academic critics, and was defended, in the case of the Stoics, by their endorsement of the identity of indiscernibles.[27]

I should, of course, point out that the Stoics do not call the KP's special distinguishing feature a *logos*: no 'account' is needed to justify the KP's epistemic value over and above the perceptual features of the impression. But I don't think that difference undercuts the relevance of this Platonic context to the KP. For one thing, cognitive impressions are presumed to be inherently attractive to rational animals (λογικὰ ζῷα).[28] In addition, cognition itself (*katalēpsis*) is not a mechanical effect of KPs on the mind but a state percipients generate in themselves by 'assenting' to them. There is every reason to suppose that a good Stoic would be able to give an *account* of his grounds for assenting to some KP by calling attention to its distinguishing features and their correspondence with the relevant concepts (see n. 16).

I should also point out that there is much more to Stoic epistemology than simply giving assent to KPs. The outcome of that activity is not, technically speaking, knowledge = *epistēmē*, but only justified true belief.[29] Knowledge in the special Stoic sense, Zeno's hand-over-fist image, is the prerogative of the wise man, and standardly defined as *katalēpsis* so secure that it cannot be changed by *logos*.[30] May we, perhaps, see here an intriguing correction or addition to Socrates' third attempt to define knowledge as 'true judgement together with a *logos*'? Zeno's definition of knowledge seems to suggest that simply 'having an account or distinguishing mark' is insufficient to secure knowledge's impregnable requirement. Rather, Stoic knowledge needs to be capable of successfully defending itself in the face of *any* argument or *any* account that might be advanced *against* it.

[26] Zeno, according to Cicero, *Acad.* 1.41 = LS 40B2.
[27] See *Acad.* 2. 55–8; 84–7.
[28] See *Acad* 2.30–2; Epictetus, 1.28, 1–5; 3.3, 2–4.
[29] See LS ch. 41 for evidence and discussion concerning this point.
[30] Cicero, *Acad.* 2.145 = LS 41A; Sextus, *M* 7.151 = LS 41C.

There is an intriguing symmetry between the three movements of the *Theaetetus* in its entirety—(1) knowledge as perception *simpliciter* (Protagoras' doctrine); (2) knowledge as true judgement; (3) knowledge as true judgement together with a *logos*—and the first three stages of Zeno's famous manual simile (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.145 = LS 41A): (1) having an impression (outstretched fingers); (2) assenting to the impression (slightly contracted fingers); and (3) *katalēpsis* (clenched fist). The dialogue, as I have just said, seems to offer us nothing corresponding to Zeno's final stage (4) systematic and irrefutable *epistēmē* (left hand gripping right hand). Here, I suggest, we may see Zeno offering his own solution to the aporetic conclusion of the *Theaetetus*, but not without assistance from another Platonic dialogue; for the Stoic wise man's wisdom involves 'knowledge of causes', and thus recalls the calculation of the cause (αἰτίας λογισμός) that converts true belief to knowledge at the end of the *Meno*.[31]

IV

Some later Platonists took the topic of the *Theaetetus* to be the criterion of truth, regarding the dialogue as Plato's exploration of perceptual, as distinct from genuine, knowledge.[32] That interpretation is unlikely to be older than the first century BC, when the Academy's sceptical stance was fading and the subject of the criterion, as an empiricist standard of truth, had become central owing to the Stoics and their Academic critics. By itself, this interpretation offers no independent support for my paper's suggestions about Zeno's use of the *Theaetetus*. However, it is attractively compatible with them, and it also shows how doctrines such as his KP influenced philosophically informed interpreters of Plato's dialogue.

Earlier than this criterial reading, the Academic sceptics were taking the dialogue, with its ultimate failure to define knowledge, as prime support for their identification of Socrates and Plato as sceptics. It is reasonable to guess that this interpretation was pioneered by Arcesilaus himself. Once again, it does not directly support my proposals about Zeno's use of the dialogue, but, if they are plausible, Arcesilaus, as head or soon to be head of the Academy, will have had very strong incentives to make objections—not only to Zeno's

[31] For knowledge of causes and further Stoic links with Platonic epistemology, see Long 1978.
[32] See *Anon in Tht.* col. II.11, with commentary by Bastianini and Sedley 1995, and Sedley 1996.

constructive reading of the dialogue in general, but more particularly to Zeno's (mis)appropriation of Plato's concepts, models, and terms for his own epistemology.

As I said at the beginning, Zeno was as ready to take over and sometimes modify Platonic notions that suited him as he was to reject and argue against others. An instance I have not already mentioned is the Stoic (and presumably) Zenonian doctrine that thinking is internal speech.[33] Single correspondences in thought and language between the *Theaetetus* and the KP could easily be explained as coincidences and commonplaces, but I hope to have shown that the resemblances are cumulatively impressive, and that Zeno's hypothesized use of the dialogue has a significant bearing on the formulation and goal of the KP. In particular, I would stress Zeno's use of terminology that characterizes the intrinsic stamping and sealing of the KP, that is, his use of the ἐν- prefix with the words ἐναπομεμαγμένη and ἐναπεσφραγισμένη. Not only does this echo Plato's ἐνσημαινομένους, it also reflects Plato's emphasis on the 'internal' location of the imprints and stamps, but applies them not, as Plato does, to the mind but to the criterial impressions themselves. No less significant, in my opinion, is the correspondence between the KP's uniquely distinguishing mark of its truth and the Socratic proposal that a true judgement requires a *logos*/differentia if it is to count as knowledge.

V

Few philosophical doctrines, even ones as bold as Zeno's KP, have no demonstrable antecedents. If we knew anything about his book *On signs*, the guesses of this paper might have been securely testable. Unfortunately, they are not, but no known text is more likely to have stimulated Zeno's epistemology than the *Theaetetus*. Even if Plato developed the Wax Tablet purely as a dialectical device, the fertility of the model is corroborated by its striking afterlife. Its salient features were no less amenable to positive interpretation, setting out conditions for true perceptual judgements, than to Socrates' explicit purpose of showing what makes perceptual judgements false.

Two of the dialogue's surprising features, from a Platonic standpoint, are its virtual restriction of putative knowables to perceptual particulars, and its exemplification of false judgement by reference to misidentifications of these.

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[33] See Long 1971, 82, with reference to *Tht.* 190a and *Soph.* 263e.

Zeno, given his physicalism and metaphysical concentration on particulars, can only have welcomed this focus of the dialogue. It may also have encouraged him to regard the *Theaetetus*, with its reticence on the epistemology we regard as characteristically Platonic, as a distinctly Socratic essay.[34] That would explain not only the dialogue's initial attractions for Zeno but also his constructive adaptation of ideas that Plato's Socrates offers to Theaetetus. For, while those ideas do not prove fecund within the strategy of the dialogue itself, my proposal is that they challenged Zeno to discover the answer to Socrates' question, 'What is knowledge?', and to formulate the KP as a doctrine true to the spirit and direction of Socrates' explorations.[35]

The price Zeno paid for that was Academic challenges of just the kind that exemplify false judgement in the *Theaetetus*: How can we be certain, when we think we are seeing Theaetetus that we have not mistaken him for Theodorus?

Arcesilaus, as I mentioned above, had persuaded Zeno to give the KP a third condition in addition to (1) arising from what is, and (2) stamped and imprinted in accordance with what is—the condition (3): 'such as could not arise from what is not.' In Arcesilaus' eyes this third condition, which Zeno accepted, was a poisoned chalice because it gave the KP a modal property, its unconditional reliability, that Arcesilaus took to be demonstrably false. Subsequent controversy over the KP centred on the question of whether the Stoics could successfully link its definition to this third condition, which implies the incorrigibility of that which the KP represents to be true. As far as I have noticed, the Wax Tablet, Aviary, and True Belief with an Account models of knowledge in the *Theaetetus* do not specify the incorrigibility condition, which could account for its absence from Zeno's original definition of the KP. However, the condition and its implications are stated by Socrates at an early stage of his exploration of Protagoras: 'If I'm free from falsehood, and don't trip up in my thinking about the things which are, or come to be, how could I fail to have knowledge of the things I am a perceiver of?' (160d1–3).

This passage helps my case in three ways. First, it deals, like the KP, with perceptual incorrigibility. Second, it acknowledges that even a Protagorean

relativist might misthink what he is perceiving, meaning, I take it, that he might misidentify or misdescribe the object of his perception even within his own relativistic mind-set. Later Stoics (probably under Academic pressure) allowed that the occurrence of a KP would not suffice to guarantee incorrigible perception if perceivers were subject to false beliefs that blocked their capacity to assent to the KP, as for instance Admetus' false belief, when presented with a KP of Alcestis, that she was dead.[36] This Stoic caveat takes Socrates' point that false beliefs can impede knowledge even when the perceptual evidence as such is unimpeachable.

Third, and most intriguing, the eclectic Platonist Antiochus of Ascalon strenuously supported his defence of the Academy against Philonian fallibilism by completely appropriating Zeno's KP, with particular emphasis on the third 'incorrigibility' condition: 'We declare that this definition of Zeno's is absolutely correct; for how can anything be grasped in such a way as to make you absolutely confident that it has been perceived and known, if it has a form that could belong to it even if it were false?' (Cicero, *Acad*. 2.18).[37]

Antiochus' Stoic proclivities are well known, but he was quite prepared to align himself with Plato or Aristotle in cases where he thought Zeno had improperly deviated from that grand tradition. Hence I have long been puzzled about how he could have thought that Zeno's epistemology was compatible with his own espousal of a positivist Academic/Platonic theory of knowledge. The answer, I suggest, is that he was familiar with the Stoic appropriation of the *Theaetetus*. Like the later Platonists I referred to a while back, Antiochus must have viewed the *Theaetetus*, notwithstanding its ostensibly negative conclusions, as giving Plato's authoritative views on empirical knowledge.

[36] Sextus, *M* 7.253 = LS 40K.
[37] On the importance of this passage as Stoicizing criticism of Philo, see Britain 2001, esp. 150–1.

12

Stoic psychology and the elucidation of language

During the creative period of Stoicism grammar was still in its infancy as a determinate field of study. I mention this fact because, as is well known, the Stoics were enormously influential on the Graeco-Roman grammatical tradition, which extends from the later Hellenistic epoch into the Christian period of the Roman empire. Recourse to the Stoic influence on that tradition, excellently facilitated by Karlheinz Hülser's collection (1987), can give the impression that these philosophers were merely pioneers in starting what the grammarians carried forward more fully and systematically. I want to suggest that such an impression may be seriously misleading in two respects.[1] First, it implies, incorrectly I believe, that the Stoics approached language as a phenomenon calling *primarily* for the kind of grammatical and syntactical description later grammarians developed. Secondly, it fails to identify the philosophical considerations that underpin the Stoics' principal interests in language. The Stoics had some splendid intuitions about the phonetic, grammatical, and semantic levels of linguistic structure, as I hope to show in the second part of this chapter. Although these bear directly on the development of traditional grammar, they also seem to have clear affinities with what modern experts in linguistics call universal grammar.

[1] The studies from which I have learned most about the complex relation between Stoicism and the work of grammarians are Lloyd 1971 and Frede 1987*b* and 1987*c*.

The material I have chosen in order to make this point will be drawn primarily from sections of Diogenes Laertius' doxography of Stoicism (7.41–83). This is our only comprehensive account of 'the logical part' of Stoic philosophy. I shall deal mainly with Diogenes' section 'on utterance' (*peri phōnēs*) or 'on signifiers' (*peri sēmainontōn*), which forms the first part of the subdivision of 'dialectic' (DL 7.55–62). The second part of that subdivision (7.63–82) is 'on significations' (*peri sēmainomenōn*). This division of dialectic into signifiers and significations has a clear rationale, as we shall see, but it too can yield misleading impressions, especially if it is taken to imply that the subdivisions are independent of one another or that there are no superordinate concepts that unite them. I shall argue that there are two such concepts, *phantasia* and *logos*, and that these together provide the foundations of the Stoic theory of language and logic.[2]

There is a third general point that I want to address. Scholars have become accustomed to making a sharp distinction between the Stoic concept of linguistic signs (words and sentences) and their concept of *sēmeion*.[3] They applied the latter term (as distinct from the term *sēmainon*) to a pattern of sign-inference from a fact or proposition that is evident to a fact or proposition that is non-evident. It so happens that nothing is said about sign-inference in Diogenes Laertius' doxography of Stoic logic.[4]

Whatever the explanation for this omission may be, it cannot be doubted that the Stoics classified sign-inferences under the 'significations' heading of the division of dialectic. As such, they are not linguistic signs but a class of propositions *signified by* linguistic signs. The antecedent or 'if' clause of a sign-inference is a meaning or sayable (*lekton*), not the sentence by which this meaning is expressed, and what the 'if' clause is the sign for is the truth value of its consequent and the connection of that truth value to itself. However, what we should conclude from this is not that sign-inference is a function of logic *as distinct from* language, but that it is a normative function of language, that is, language in its epistemic and truth-signifying capacity. Not only do sign-inferences require language for their expression; they are also tied to language as *lekta*, or sentence content. Correspondingly, language is tied to *lekta* (including sign-inferences) for its semantic content. The Stoics applied the term *logos* both to significant utterances (linguistic signifiers) and

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[2] There is no novelty about this claim. Its implications are explored by Imbert 1978 and Manetti 1988, and I dealt with them at some length in Long 1971. My main point here is to elucidate the primacy attached to *phantasia* in Stoic logic.

[3] See Long 1971, 84–8.   [4] This is noted and explored by Ebert 1991, 54 ff.

to sign-inferences of the form: if *p*, then *q*. The presence of *logos* on both sides of the division of dialectic is hardly inadvertent. I take it as an indication that what the Stoics were seeking to elucidate was a unitary science of discourse, which would comprehend both linguistic signs and sign-inferences without reducing one to the other.

So much for my agenda. I proceed next to make some programmatic remarks about language in Stoicism and its psychological foundations.

LANGUAGE: *LOGOS*, *PHANTASIA*, *LEKTA*

> All things are observed through study conducted in discourses (or sentences—*en logois*), whether they belong to the domain of physics or equally that of ethics. As to logic, that goes without saying.

This statement occurs at the end of Diogenes Laertius' doxography of Stoic logic (7.83 = LS 31C). In its context it justifies the Stoic doctrine that 'the wise man is always a dialectician'. That doctrine cannot mean that the wise man is always doing formal logic or engaging in argument by question and answer. The wise man is the Stoics' paradigm for the good life in all its aspects, which include family life and civic service. What the statement about the wise man's dialectical activity tells us is something essential to his character or excellence. As a dialectician, the wise man has knowledge which includes linguistic and logical expertise, but also knowledge of how to conduct his life according to rational principles. His dialectic equips him to deal with the world as well as with other philosophers; it enables him to give his assent only to those mental impressions (*phantasiai*) which are 'cognitive' (*katalēptikai*), meaning that they correspond incorrigibly to facts or the way things are. Dialectic is the foundation of his capacity to organize his actions so that they conform to reason and the way the world is structured.[5]

Diogenes' remarks about dialectic and the Stoic sage help us to understand the Stoics' emphasis on the rationality and internal coherence of their philosophy. To be sure, they made contributions to linguistics, semantics, and logic which are highly technical and susceptible to study independently of their system as a whole. But their philosophy was a *system*, and they liked to advertise the fact. We get a glimpse of this in the observation about the way 'study conducted in discourses' infiltrates all parts of Stoic philosophy. That implies, of course,

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[5] For further study of the general role of dialectic in Stoicism, see Long 1978*b*.

that philosophy as such is a linguistic activity, but the Stoics have more in mind than this truism when they emphasize the importance of dialectic. According to their definitions, dialectic includes both 'speaking well' and 'knowledge of what is true, false, and neither true nor false' (DL 7.42 = LS 31A). The first of these definitions, 'speaking well', incorporates the second. 'Knowing what is true, false, and neither true nor false' is the precondition for 'speaking well', and we can add that both definitions have far-reaching implications for thought and action. The Stoics identified the source of human speech with thought.[6] They also supposed that human action is determined by the propositions people assent to, that is, by what people take to be true. Thought and language constitute the core of the human self.

That was scarcely a new idea in the history of Greek philosophy. It is, however, a very big idea, as becomes evident as soon as we move beyond psychology and language to science and metaphysics. If science and metaphysics are possible, there must be a cognitive link between language and thought on the one hand and how the world is structured on the other hand. One way of trying to make that link is via onomatopoeic etymologies—positing, that is, a mimetic connection between the phonetic elements of language and features of reality. At least some Stoics flirted with this dangerous theory and drew upon it in their account of primitive language.[7] However, Chrysippus was well aware of its limitations as an explanation of language in its current form (*SVF* 2.151–2). Whatever the Stoics in general took the 'naturalness' of language to consist in, they never supposed that the meaning of a sentence could simply be reduced to the etymology of its component words.

It might seem, at first glance, that the Stoics should have no major problem about linking language with reality. The key concept in their theory of language is the untranslatable term *logos*, and they used the same word for naming the 'active principle' of reality, which they also called god or 'designing fire' or 'breath' (*pneuma*).[8] It would obviously be mistaken to think that *logos* as applied to language has the same denotation as *logos* applied to the active principle of reality. That principle does not act by formulating sentences but by giving form and structure to matter. *Logos* the active principle is the universal cause, activating all particular bodies and endowing them individually and

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[6] *dianoia*; see Galen, *Plac.* 2.5.9–13 De Lacy = LS 53U.

[7] For discussions of the largely Roman evidence concerning Stoic contributions to, or influence on, etymology and word-formation, see Frede 1987*c*, 333–7; Lloyd 1971, 59–60, 62–5; Long 2005*b*. I comment later on the total absence of any treatment of these matters in Diogenes Laertius' logical doxography.

[8] DL 7.134–6 = LS 44B, 46B; Aetius 1.7.33 = LS 46A.

the world collectively with coherence. What connects *logos*, as the structure of nature, with *logos* as language is a third sense of the term, rationality or thought. Nature according to the Stoics is a rational or intelligible structure, and it is so not merely in the sense that we humans can understand it but especially in the sense that it actually is the divine intelligence at work (cf. Cicero, *ND* 2.115; *SVF* 2.1132 ff.). Putting these three senses of *logos* together, the Stoics, it seems, should be in a position to make the following proposal: language is the means of expressing semantic/logical structures (including sign-inferences) which correspond to the way existing things are configured by the *logos* present in them. Or to say it in another way, we can talk intelligibly about things because we can think correctly about things, and we can think correctly about things because things are structured according to rational principles.

The presence of *logos* in these interconnected spheres—language and thought, rationality, and reality—gives the Stoics a powerful linkage between what human beings have good reason to say and the way the world is constituted. However, Stoic semantics, and more than just semantics, is intriguingly complicated by their physics and metaphysics. Unlike Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics confined existence to bodies. Their test for existence is 'capacity to act or be acted upon', and only bodies, they argued, satisfy that condition.[9] They devised their physics and metaphysics accordingly. They found it possible to give a physicalist account of *logos* in the three senses I have just outlined (language, reason, and the world's active principle), and to explain much that Plato and Aristotle deemed to be incorporeal (for instance, the *psychē*) by reference to bodily states. However, they did not try to reduce everything with which language and thought deal to body. On the contrary, they posited a set of four 'incorporeal' (or 'bodyless') items—time, place, void, and *lekta*.

The incorporeality, and hence the equivocal ontological status, of these items is a large and fascinating topic.[10] I shall discuss it very briefly here, confining my remarks to its bearing on the Stoic concept of language. Oversimplifying somewhat, one can say that *lekta* are the subject-matter of the entire subdivision of dialectic concerned with 'significations'.[11] These incorporeal 'sayables' constitute the meanings of linguistic signs, or at least of those

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[9] See LS ch. 44.　　　　[10] See LS ch. 27 and Brunschwig 1994*c*.

[11] The oversimplification arises because, while the 'complete' *lekton* undoubtedly consists of a 'case' (*ptōsis*) and a predicate, and predicates not completed by a case are characterized as 'incomplete' *lekta*, we are nowhere told that this characterization pertains to 'cases' on their own. For discussion

linguistic signs that are sentences or expressions containing a verb. As such, 'complete' *lekta* include (but are not confined to) 'propositions' (*axiōmata*), that is, statements that are true or false. In addition, some of our sources are emphatic in distinguishing *lekta* as incorporeal from the corporeal nature of words and sentences. Yet, Diogenes Laertius does not do so in his doxography. While he indicates that 'utterance' (*phōnē*) is a body (7.56), he says nothing about the incorporeality of *lekta*, though he does indicate that they 'subsist from *phantasiai*' (7.43), a doctrine I discuss below. The most obvious place for Diogenes to have alluded to the former of these two points would have been his opening remarks on the topic of 'significations' (7.63). This omission may be due to carelessness or deficiencies in his sources, but it could indicate that the Stoics themselves saw no reason to deal explicitly with the incorporeality of *lekta* in their dialectic. Perhaps they thought it would misleadingly suggest an unbridgeable gap, as distinct from a basic distinction, between the phonetic and the semantic aspects of language.

The incorporeal status of *lekta* is too sketchily attested for us to know exactly how much attention we should give it in elucidating the Stoic theory of language in its technical detail. Minimally, we can say that it provides metaphysical underpinning for a basic distinction they want to draw between phonetic form and semantic content. If you know that only the former of these is corporeal, you presumably know that analysing linguistic sounds or written letters and syllables will never be sufficient to identify someone's meaning and to distinguish sentences that express truths from those that express falsehoods. You also know, perhaps, that knowing something to be true or false is not a sufficient condition for being able to pick out the correct expression for it in a given language. Since, however, determinate phonetic form and semantic content are both essential to successful speech acts, the Stoics need to identify the interdependence of phonetics and semantics as well as to distinguish them. Later in this study I shall suggest that they try to meet both of these conditions.

A second basic property of *lekta* is their mind dependence. The canonical definition of a *lekton* is 'that which subsists in accordance with a rational impression' (*phantasia logikē*).[12] This definition tells us that *lekta* are not things that exist in their own right but depend, in some way, upon rational

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of this difficult issue, see Long 1971, 104–6; Graeser 1978, 90–2; Frede 1987*b*, 304–5; and LS vol. 1, pp. 200–1.

[12] DL 7.63; Sextus, *M* 8.70 = LS 33C. The verb translated 'subsists' (*hyphistanai*) is used in Stoicism to express the quasi-existence accorded to 'incorporeals'; see Long 1971, 89–90.

impressions.[13] That expression is the Stoics' generic name for an adult human being's awareness of anything. The scope of the term covers all thought contents, ranging from simple sensory experiences to the representation of abstract concepts.[14] *Phantasia* is the most basic faculty of the Stoic soul. In its simplest form it is the way the soul is imprinted by the information it receives via the five sense organs. Without *phantasia*, animals would have no cognitive access to their environment or the conditions of their bodies. What distinguishes the class of human beings is the rationality of their *phantasiai*. This is defined (references above) as an impression 'according to which what is presented can be shown forth in speech'. Speech, then, appears to be the manifestation of what is rational about rational impressions. Or, to put it another way, rationality, as it pertains to human beings, is manifested in language. Taking this definition in conjunction with that of the *lekton* itself, we can see that the Stoics treat this concept as the semantic correlate or semantic equivalent of the rationality of impressions. As 'sayables', *lekta* depend upon the representational and vocal capacity of rational animals.[15]

We can now see why *phantasia* occupies the primary position in Stoic logic. 'It leads the way; then thought, which is able to talk, expresses in speech what it experiences by the agency of *phantasia*' (DL 7.49). Seneca offers a fascinating illustration of this doctrine in a context where he is distinguishing the corporeal status of utterances from the incorporeal nature of *lekta*.

For instance, I see Cato walking; the sense of sight reveals this to me and the mind believes it. What I see is a body and it is to a body that I direct my eyes and my mind. Then I say 'Cato is walking'. What I now say is not a body but a certain assertion about a body . . . Thus when we say 'wisdom' we take this to be something corporeal; but when we say 'he is wise' we make an assertion *about* a body. (*Ep.* 117.13 = LS 33E)

Analysis of this passage is generally restricted to Seneca's elucidation of the incorporeal and predicative nature of *lekta*, but his remarks are no less important as an illustration of their dependence on *phantasia*. What Seneca starts

[13] On this point and the complexities surrounding it, see Long 1971, 94–8; Graeser 1978, 89–90, 95–7. Two of the chief difficulties are that some *lekta*, as true propositions, range over what we would call facts, and they also constitute the effects of causes. In LS vol. 1, p. 202, we suggest that some of the mind-dependence problems would be mitigated if 'subsists in accordance with a rational impression' can embrace the possibility as well as the actuality of such subsistence.

[14] See Long 1991, 266–75.

[15] The Stoics were unique among ancient philosophers in treating vocal capacity (*phōnētikon*) as a distinctly specifiable 'part' of the soul (*SVF* 2.836 = LS 53H). What this implies, however, is not that it functions independently of the soul's 'commanding faculty'—the principal part—but that it is an instrument for this part's activities, and on a par in this respect with the five senses.

from is the sight of Cato walking, and he adjoins to this visual impression the mind's 'assent' to it. Only as the third stage in his account does he *say*, 'Cato is walking'. This progression corresponds exactly to the testimony of Diogenes Laertius (cited above) concerning thought's vocalization of what it experiences by the agency of *phantasia*.

The primary causal role ascribed to *phantasia* seems obvious in one respect: in order to talk, we need to be aware of something to talk about. Language is a sign of something present to the mind. Yet, people do not typically experience a moment of awareness *followed by* a moment of linguistic formulation. What we are typically aware of is already linguistically packaged and identifiable precisely so. Only rarely do we look first, as it were, and *then* say — 'I see Cato walking'. Do the Stoics conceal this equally obvious point by their talk about a *phantasia* stage that is *followed by* the linguistic formulation of thought? Should they not acknowledge that our impressions of things are typically imprinted by language all the way down? I think they would accept that the second of these points is generally true. What they want to bring out by emphasizing the priority of *phantasia* is not its independence of language in the case of adult persons, but three different ways in which it is prior to language from an analytical perspective.

The first perspective is cognitive. What puts us immediately in touch with the world is not language but the look, sound, and shape and so on of things. Sensory experience precedes language in the way the world shows itself to us, and we may thus think of *phantasia* as a sensuous sign to which the mind assigns a linguistic designation. Secondly, sensory experience precedes language acquisition in human development. The Stoics were careful to emphasize the time it takes for rationality and language to mature (Aetius 4.11.1–4 = LS 39E). Thirdly, *phantasia* is prior to language from the perspective of animal life in general. Non-human animals lack language, but they too are endowed with sense-organs and some capacity for processing sensory information. Non-human animals, as we shall see in a moment, provide the Stoics with important material for picking out what is distinctive about human rationality and language capacity.

The dependence of *lekta* on *phantasiai* should not be taken to imply that nothing can be said (or be true or false) which is not already being thought by someone. *Lekta* are 'sayables', and their modality is a central part of their nature. The only limit on what is sayable should be what is thinkable by a being with a comprehensive awareness of what anyone might want to say, including especially propositions. The Stoics probably took their deity to be

such a being, and they also ascribed something similar to their paragon of knowledge—the wise man.[16]

There are two further testimonies on *phantasia* that will help to consolidate points I have been making thus far. Both of them are concerned with distinguishing human from non-human animals.

First, Epictetus, in a discourse entitled *On providence* (1.6. 11–22 = LS 63E), draws the following comparison and contrast between humans and other animals. We share with the latter the mental faculty of *phantasia*, which provides all living creatures above the level of plants with the sensory information they require in order to survive and live their particular kind of life by eating, sleeping, reproducing, and so forth. We human beings share in these animal needs, but our faculty of *phantasia* has a conceptual as well as a sensory aspect.[17] We use this faculty (or rather, we are designed to use it) not only for receiving information but also reflexively. Unlike other animals, we have the capacity to reflect on our impressions by asking what they tell us about ourselves and the world. Epictetus calls this capacity *parakolouthēsis*. The term signifies approximately attentiveness or (self-)consciousness, but its linguistic form is interesting. Literally it means 'following along with', or 'putting oneself in tune with'. As such, the term provides psychological backing for the central Stoic thought that the human project is to live in agreement with nature. Epictetus is saying that we are naturally endowed with the kind of consciousness that equips us to understand our relation to the world and direct our lives accordingly.

He infers that this faculty gives human beings a quite different goal from that of other animals. What it means, he says, is that: 'God introduced the human being as an observer (*theatēs*) of himself and his works, and not merely as an observer but also as an interpreter (*exēgetēs*) of these things.' Epictetus comes very close here to treating nature as a book or code or drama. Although he does not specify linguistic aptitude as a human being's special attribute, he implies it by casting our species as an interpreter.[18] What gives human beings this interpretative role is their capacity to reflect on their impressions, which are their window onto the divine text, as it were; or, as we are entitled to add, their capacity to articulate them by giving them appropriate linguistic formulation and structural coherence.

[16] The distinction they drew between 'truth' and 'the true' is highly relevant to this point; see Long 1971, 98–102 and 1978*a*.

[17] More on these two aspects of *phantasia* in Kerferd 1978, 258, and Manetti 1988, 135.

[18] Cf. Verbeke 1978, 402.

The second passage that bears on this issue is very similar in its gist and starting-point. It occurs in a context of Sextus Empiricus, where (in order to argue against it later) he sets out an ontological defence of the human capacity to make sign-inferences (*M* 8.275–6 = LS 53T). Although he does not attribute the defence to the Stoics specifically, they are clearly his principal source.

They say that it is not 'uttered speech' (*prophorikos logos*) by which human beings differ from non-rational animals but 'internal speech' (*endiathetos logos*); for crows and parrots and jays utter articulate sounds. Nor is it by the merely simple impression that human beings differ (for the other animals too receive impressions), but by impressions involving inference and combination (*phantasia metabatikē kai synthetikē*). This amounts to human beings' possessing the 'conception of following' (*akolouthia*) and directly grasping, on account of 'following', the idea of 'sign' (*sēmeion*). For sign is itself of the sort: 'If this, then that.' Therefore the existence of signs follows from a human being's nature and constitution.

The argument requires an extra premise, which Sextus supplies later (ibid. 284–5).[19] The premise is that human beings are providentially constructed. Once that premise is inserted, the similarities with the passage from Epictetus are patent. Epictetus told us that a human being's special faculty—bestowed by God—is *parakolouthēsis*. That faculty enables human beings to reflect on their impressions, and, by using them as the means of putting themselves cognitively and ethically in tune with the world, become an interpreter of God's works. Sextus too focuses upon the human difference from other animals in respect of impressions, but instead of referring to *parakolouthēsis*, he speaks of 'a conception of following', and derives it from the thought that human impressions involve 'inference' and 'combination'. Sextus then connects this kind of impression with sign-inference: 'If this, then that.'

The logical relation constituting the sign and what it signifies is here grounded in human psychology *and* divine providence. Signs are the articulation of inferences that humans naturally and designedly make as shown by the way their impressions function and speak to consciousness. It should now be clear how intimately the two concepts, *logos* and *phantasia*, are tied together in the Stoics' account of human psychology. The capacity for internal speech or language implies the inference-making *phantasia*, and the latter, in turn, implies the capacity for internal speech. If this is correct, it provides just the

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[19] See Burnyeat 1982*c*, 206–7, who should be consulted for further details concerning this dense passage.

kind of unitary psychology I set out to seek concerning linguistic signs and sign-inferences. Each of these can be seen as the natural and providential outcome of what is basic to human beings, a faculty for representing experience that is rational or sayable (*phantasia logikē*).

We are now in a position to understand the deepest sense in which *phantasia* is the starting-point of Stoic dialectic and the logical part of their philosophy quite generally. As philosophers who were totally committed to objective knowledge, the Stoics needed to provide solid foundations for connecting language and thought to the way things really are. *Phantasia* does this job for them, inasmuch as it has the two aspects I have been reviewing. On the one hand, it is the mind's capacity for grasping evidence about external objects—'revealing itself and its cause', as the Stoics put it (*SVF* 2.54 = LS 39B). In addition, where rational beings are concerned *phantasia* is necessarily linked to *logos*, which means that the evidence it provides is manifested to consciousness not only sensuously but also linguistically and logically. The Stoics, of course, were careful to acknowledge that *phantasia* is not always veridical or trustworthy. However, it is so in its 'cognitive' manifestations, which are, we should assume, its normal and normative occurrences. Hence, as Diogenes Laertius (7.49) says, *phantasia* is 'generically the criterion of truth'.

Because human beings are providentially designed to be exegetes of nature (recall Epictetus) and to organize their lives on the basis of knowledge and truth, they are endowed with the evidence-gathering *and* logico/linguistic faculties that such a life requires. Equally, as Burnyeat (1982, 207) excellently observes in his commentary on the Sextus passage: 'There must in reality be the connexions that reason takes itself to be discovering. If nothing is objectively evidence for anything else, man is poorly equipped for the world he has to live in; which cannot be so if his cognitive equipment (*kataskeuē*) is the endowment of providence.' The two faces or aspects of *phantasia logikē*—looking out to the world and reflecting through language on what the world shows—help to explain an apparent ambivalence in the way the concept is positioned in Diogenes Laertius' logical doxography. At the beginning of his account, he specifies a twofold division of 'the logical part' into rhetoric and dialectic (7.41). He then notes that 'some (Stoics) include further subdivisions into "definition" and "canons and criteria"'. In what immediately follows (7.42) he writes as if these are subdivisions of the logical part and co-ordinate to 'rhetoric' and 'dialectic'. As to the objective of 'canons and criteria', it deals, he says, 'with the discovery of truth and regulates the different types of *phantasiai*.

This passage gives the impression that the evidence-gathering function of *phantasia* is conceptually distinct from dialectic (the study of language and logic). However, a few lines later, after reporting the division of dialectic into 'significations' and 'utterance' (linguistic signifier), Diogenes states that 'the topic of significations is divided into the sub-topics of *phantasiai* and the *lekta* that subsist from them' (7.43). Here, then, as my earlier discussion will have led us to expect, *phantasia* is not only included under dialectic; it is also, again understandably, linked with the study of its subsisting *lekta*.[20]

Confusion and conflation of source-material are common enough in Diogenes Laertius. In this case, however, we can discover a philosophical message in his apparent ambivalence regarding the position of *phantasia* in Stoic logic. Rather than continuing to call it ambivalence, I prefer to see it as proof of the two faces of *phantasia*. A *phantasia* is not, literally, a 'signification'. It can be discussed, as it is discussed (7.50), in terms of the way the soul is imprinted by the mediation of the sense organs. But inasmuch as human impressions are rational and include concepts, they extend into the domain of 'significations' because of the *lekta* associated with them.

LINGUISTIC UTTERANCE

What has been said thus far has had little to do with linguistic signs. In what follows I focus upon the sections of Diogenes' logical doxography (7.55–9) in which he treats the primary concepts of the first division of dialectic into 'utterance' or 'signifier'.[21] The purpose of my analysis is to elucidate the conditions the Stoics take to be necessary and sufficient for an utterance to be a meaningful sentence—a *logos*. Stated as a question, which links up with my previous remarks, what must Speaker *S* do in order to transmit to Hearer *H* the *lekton* corresponding to *S*'s 'rational impression' ? For ease of presentation, it seems best to begin with a tabulated translation which exhibits the structural relation between the primary concepts.

1(a) The majority [of Stoics] agree that dialectical study takes its starting-point from the topic of utterance (*phōnē*). 1(b) Utterance is air that has been struck, or the

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[20] Cf. also DL 7.49, drawing on Diocles of Magnesia.

[21] DL 7.55–7 is discussed in great detail by Ax 1986, 151–207. His comments are particularly valuable on the historical antecedents (Platonic and Aristotelian) of some of the Stoic terms and concepts, and also on their afterlife in grammatical writers. One can learn a lot about the Stoic concepts of *phōnē*, *lexis*, *dialektos*, and *logos* by comparing what they share and do not share with Aristotle's discussions at *De an.* 2.8 and *Hist. an.* 4.9. I have limited my discussion here to the usage of the Stoic concepts in DL's doxography.

specific object of hearing, as Diogenes of Babylon says in his work *On utterance*. 1(c) The utterance of animals is air that has been struck by impulse (*hormē*). 1(d) The utterance of human beings is articulate (*enarthros*) and issues from thought (*dianoia*), as Diogenes [of Babylon] says, and it is perfected by the fourteenth year. 1(e) Utterance is a body, according to the Stoics . . . for everything that causes an effect is a body, and utterance, by coming into proximity with auditors, causes an effect on them from those who utter.

2(a) Expression (*lexis*), as Diogenes [of Babylon] says, is alphabetic (*engrammatos*) utterance, such as 'day'.[22]

3(a) Speech (*logos*) is semantic utterance, issuing from thought (*dianoia*), <such as 'It is day' > [supplying the last words with Casaubon].

4(a) Dialect (*dialektos*) is expression that has an ethnic or Greek stamp, or local expression, that is, local in respect of dialect, such as *thalatta* in Attic and *hēmerē* in Ionic.

2(b) The elements of expression (*lexis*) are the twenty-four letters . . . seven of these are voiced (vowels) . . . and six of them are non-voiced . . .

1(f)/2(c) Utterance and expression differ because breathy sound (*ēchos*) is also utterance but only expression is articulate.

2(d)/3(b) Expression differs from speech because speech is always semantic but expression is also non-semantic, as in the case of 'blituri' . . .

1(g)/3(c) In addition, speaking (*legein*) is different from giving voice (*propheresthai*); for utterances are given voice, but states of affairs (*pragmata*) are spoken, and these turn out to be *lekta*.

3(d) There are five parts of speech (as Diogenes says in his work *On utterance*, and Chrysippus too): proper name (*onoma*), appellative (*prosēgoria*), verb (*rhēma*), conjunction (*syndesmos*), article (*arthron*); but Antipater, in his works *On expression and things said*, also includes adverb (*mesotēs*).

3(e) An appellative, according to Diogenes, is a part of speech that signifies a common quality, such as 'human being', 'horse'. 3(f) A proper name is a part of speech that signifies a peculiar quality, such as 'Diogenes', 'Socrates'. 3(g) A verb is a part of speech that signifies an uncompounded predicate (as Diogenes says) or (as some say) a case-less element of speech, which signifies something syntactical (*syntakton*) such as '(I) write', '(I) speak'. 3(h) A conjunction is a case-less part of speech, which binds the parts of speech together. 3(i) An article is an element of speech that has a case and which distinguishes the genders and numbers of names . . .

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[22] *engrammatos*, which I translate by 'alphabetic', is almost certainly to be construed here as nothing more than a gloss on 'articulate' (*enarthros*). Some grammarians followed the Stoics in this, while others, such as Priscian, distinguished articulation from alphabetization; cf. Tabarroni 1988.

3(j) There are five excellences of speech: Hellenism, clarity, brevity, propriety, and construction.

3(k) Hellenism is diction which is faultless in using words technically as distinct from randomly. 3(l) Clarity is expression which presents what is thought intelligibly. 3(m) Brevity is expression which includes just what is necessary for signifying the subject-matter. 3(n) Propriety is expression appropriate to the subject-matter. 3(o) Construction is expression that avoids colloquialism. 3(p) Linguistic faults include barbarism, which is expression contrary to the practice of reputable Greek-speakers, and solecism, which is speech that is syntactically irregular.

From this point (7.60) Diogenes Laertius provides definitions of poetry, 'definition' (*horos*), 'sketch' (*hypographē*), genus, generic concept (*ennoēma*), species, types of division, and partition (*merismos*). He concludes his treatment of the 'signifier' division of dialectic with the following account of ambiguity (7.62):

2(e) Ambiguity is expression which signifies two or even more things lexically, strictly, and according to the same linguistic practice, with the result that, so far as this expression is concerned, the plurality of things is understood simultaneously.

Taken as a whole, the rationale of this section is obscure at many points. We hear nothing about the Stoics' contributions to three large topics in which their interest is well attested elsewhere—the origins of language, its naturalness or conventionality, and etymology or word-formation. However, this material is the only systematic account that we have concerning the Stoics' linguistic sign in its entirety. After analysing the surface structure of the passage, I shall try to elucidate the linguistic doctrine that this surface structure, in my opinion, partly obscures.

We are supposed to be dealing with 'utterance' or linguistic sign as distinct from signification. That project begins clearly enough (1(a) to 1(g)/3 (c)). These sections are organized on the basis of a division of utterance. First, the sounds that animals utter are distinguished from those of humans: only the latter's utterances are 'articulate' *and* 'semantic' (issuing from thought, (1(d)).[23] Having given a generic account of human utterance, the doxography

[23] The definitions of animal and human utterances must be taken normatively: some animals do utter articulate sounds, but articulation is not essential to animal utterance. Human beings do not always utter sounds that are meaningful, but meaningfulness *is* essential to human utterance, taken normatively. We should also presume that human utterance shares with that of animals the property of being 'air that has been struck by impulse'. The strongly physical language is explained by the fact that impulse (*hormē*), like all faculties of the soul, is corporeal. What the agency of impulse

then defines three distinct aspects of human utterance: 2(a) expression (*lexis*), 3(a) speech (*logos*), and 4(a) dialect. Next, the elements of *lexis* are enumerated, and its specific difference from utterance is underlined (1(f)/2(c)). Next, *logos* is differentiated from *lexis* (2(d)/3(b)), and again from utterance generically (1(g)/3(c)). Then, we start to be told about the 'parts' of *logos* (3(d)), which balances the earlier treatment (2(b)) of the 'elements' of *lexis*.

The scope of *lexis* and 'dialect' are reasonably clear. The former term appears to cover human utterance from the strictly phonetic aspect of alphabetic articulation. *Lexeis* are expressions which extend from individual letters and syllables to indefinitely larger phonetic items. Thus they include words and sentences, but do not necessarily coincide with words and sentences, so the latter do not form parts of their definition. 'Dialect' is any set of *lexeis* that encompasses the phonetic practices of a particular linguistic community; it differentiates expressions according to the way one linguistic community, as distinct from another, articulates the letters that constitute its utterances. However, as should be clear from the tabulation attached to my translation, the concept that has pride of place in the doxography is *logos*, which I have rendered by 'speech'. It is equally clear that the principal purpose for discussing the earlier items is the elucidation they provide for delineating *logos*. This will necessarily be an articulate utterance, and we can also infer that its phonetic form will be specifiable 'dialectally'. Hence it will be identifiable as an utterance in Greek, for instance, or a dialect of Greek, but its differentia is its being a 'semantic utterance (3(a)).

The meaning of 'semantic' is explained in the words that immediately follow: 'issuing from thought.' That these words are a gloss on 'semantic' is made certain by the fact that 'issuing from thought' stands in for 'semantic' in the generic definition of human utterance, which has 'articulate' as its first differentia (1(d)). A *logos*, then, will fulfil its role as 'semantic' utterance if (1) it is phonetically and dialectally articulated, and (2) expresses the speaker's thought. Taken together, the two conditions tell us that a speaker's uttered thought must be intelligibly articulated for other members of the same linguistic community.

What we now expect to be told is the properties that a *logos* needs to have in order that the operation specified in (2) can be successfully mapped onto the operation specified in (1). At this point it is worth remarking, as the Stoics

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implies in the case of human utterance is its intentionality; i.e. our giving voice is something that we are moved to do.

did, that birds are capable of producing utterances that sound like a *logos* under aspect (1). What such utterances lack, as we noticed in the report of Sextus Empiricus (*M* 8.275), is internal *logos*, or 'speaking' as distinct from 'giving voice'. So the second condition for a successful speech act presupposes everything I was saying before about rational impressions and *lekta*. Indeed, Diogenes Laertius explicitly tells us (1(g)/3(c)) that the semantic or thought contents of *logos* are *lekta*.

Now *lekta*, as we well know, are the subject-matter of the second division of dialectic, significations. And the *logos* with which we are presently concerned is still in the first division, 'utterance'. Hence, if the division is coherent, the 'parts' of this *logos* are still sounds, as distinct from meanings; they are bodies, metaphysically speaking. They cannot, then, *be* incorporeal *lekta*, but rather the phonetic instrument for signifying these. That is, they need to be words as constituents of well-formed and meaningful sentences. How, then, do they fulfil this condition in terms of their phonetic properties?

One reply that, provisionally at least, the structure of the passage seems to disallow is by reference to their articulation or syllables. That was said to be the nature of *lexis*, the aspect of human utterance that has no necessary link with meaning. So we turn to the 'parts of speech' (3(d)–(i)) and ask what they specifically contribute to expressing a speaker's thought.

The answer is formulated in terms that have traditionally been called grammatical—name or noun, verb, and so on, though the Stoics do not speak of grammar as such. However, the definitions of these parts of speech provide very little guidance on how the parts should be *lexically* identified and combined in order to form a meaningful sentence. Nothing is said here about morphology or inflection. In spite of that huge omission, the definitions appear to identify the parts of speech by their semantic and/or syntactical function: names 'signify' qualities, verbs 'signify' predicates, conjunctions 'bind' parts of speech together, articles 'distinguish' genders and numbers.

Given the fact that *logos*, as distinct from *lexis*, is inherently semantic, it might seem we are being told that qualities and predicates are the 'significations' of those expressions that are nouns and verbs; that is, that qualities and predicates are what these types of word signify as someone's thought. But, if that were unqualifiedly so, we would have to suppose that what someone who says 'Socrates' is thinking about is a peculiar quality, or that what someone who says 'writes' is thinking about is an uncompounded predicate. That would surely be extremely recondite if not absurd. Only people interested in language and metaphysics have these kind of thoughts. People in general are not thinking

about a quality when they utter the name 'Socrates', nor about a predicate when they use the verb 'writes'. They are thinking about a particular philosopher or a specific kind of activity. In deciding what the parts of speech contribute as signifiers, we need to take account of the fact that they are also 'articulated expressions' (*lexeis*).

The fact that *lexeis can be* meaningless, as in the case of the nonsense expression 'blituri', should not be taken to imply that the entire function of 'signifying' is borne by utterances that are identifiable as 'parts of speech' without reference to their articulated or alphabetic properties. Such a claim would reduce the aspect of the signifier corresponding to phonetics to being merely an instrument for mediating the parts of speech. That would be not only counter-intuitive. It would also conflict with the place assigned to articulation in the specification of human utterance (1(d)) and with everything we know from elsewhere about the Stoics' efforts to establish correspondences between phonetic properties and the properties of things.[24] We should assume, rather, that *lexeis* are standardly identified by the lexicon of a particular language—note the example of 'day' (2(a))—and are only exceptionally meaningless expressions. Members of a linguistic community will naturally associate most *lexeis* with one, or sometimes more than one, meaning (*lekton*). However, taken on their own, *lexeis* can never express more than dictionary senses, as distinct from someone's actual thought or what someone intends to say; and, as 2(e) indicates, *lexeis* are liable to be ambiguous.[25] In order to become the means of clearly expressing an actual thought or intended meaning they need to be given unambiguous, grammatical configuration as the constituents of a phrase or sentence.

This appears to be the role that the 'parts of speech' are designed to fulfil. What we should take them to *signify*, in their role as nouns, verbs, and so forth, is not the meaning that they already have in virtue of belonging to a specific lexicon—as *hippos* means 'horse' in Greek, and *trechei* means 'runs'—but the grammatical functions of these words, which *presuppose their lexical significance(s)*. Taken together as noun and verb, *hippos* and *trechei* signify the elements of *lekta* that can form (as subject and predicate) the sentence 'a horse runs'. Once we know that *hippos, qua* 'part of speech' signifies 'a common quality', we know something basic about the kind of sentence it can help to form. Likewise, when we know that *trechei* signifies, grammatically speaking,

[24] See Long 2005*b* for further discussion and bibliography.
[25] For a splendid study of the Stoic theory of ambiguity, see Atherton 1993.

an uncompounded predicate. It is true, of course, that the parts of speech, as set out here, are very limited as guides to the construction of sentences. My point is to identify these grammatical and syntactical functions as their specific contribution to the Stoics' linguistic sign.

If one is interested in looking at the Stoics' influence on the history of grammar, it will be necessary to point out that what is said about the parts of speech (3(d)) is merely one of their contributions. They had much to say about cases (briefly alluded to in 3(g)–(i)), active and passive verbs, tenses, differentiation of sentence types, and so forth. It will also be necessary to indicate that this syntax, if that is the right name for it, falls largely on the 'signification' side of the division of dialectic.[26] This implies, I think, that they regarded much that we call grammar as irreducibly abstract and incorporeal, rather than taking it to be contained in the empirical characteristics of words themselves. Inasmuch as Stoic words are sounds and therefore bodies, such grammatical information as they do contain should be identifiable by their phonetic and graphic features. It is plausible to suppose that the Stoics took this to be so for the parts of speech, but were disinclined to extend it to grammatical functions more generally in the absence of having any complete account of morphology and inflection.

If the Stoic parts of speech are defective and rudimentary, so far as the comprehensive study of words is concerned, they are supremely important for what they tell us about the Stoics' general grasp (as distinct from their application) of linguistic theory. I can perhaps best make this point by showing how, at a highly abstract level, their account of linguistic structure and communication adumbrates a scheme of natural language elaborated by Manfred Bierwisch, which I set out here in a somewhat simplified form.[27]

(1) Let us assume that the purpose of linguistic theory is to specify the conditions a Speaker (S) must fulfil if, by uttering an auditory signal (x), s/he intends to produce in a Hearer (H) the effect (e) by means of the Hearer's recognition of this intention.

(2) Let e also be the mental state or sense which S wants to communicate to H by associating it with the auditory signal x.

(3) The relation between e and x needs to be mediated by three levels of structure:

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[26] These points are most illuminatingly explored by Frede 1987*c*.
[27] I gratefully draw on material that Manfred Bierwisch presented in a seminar he gave at the Berlin Wissenschaftskolleg of which we were both members in 1991/2.

    (a) The sense that *x* can have is determined by linguistic meaning or Semantic Form (SF).

    (b) The sound that *x* can have is determined by the Phonological Form (PF) of the letters (voiced, unvoiced, etc.) that make up words and the structures letters can enter into.

    (c) For complex expressions or sentences, the relation between PF and SF (i.e. the relation between articulated sound and meaning) is mediated by the Grammatical Form (GF) of the component words.

(4) Expressed schematically, what this generates, in the case of the Speaker, is the progression:

$$e \rightarrow \text{SF} \leftarrow \text{GF} \rightarrow \text{PF} \rightarrow x;$$

and, in the case of the Hearer, the inverse ordering of the same progression:

$$x \rightarrow \text{PF} \leftarrow \text{GF} \rightarrow \text{SF} \rightarrow e.$$

As set out here, of course, this scheme of universal grammar says nothing about any rules for computing the relations that need to obtain between PF, GF, and SF. The value of the scheme, for my purpose, consists in its extreme generality. What it facilitates, if I am not mistaken, is a means of recognizing a comparable intuition on the part of the Stoics concerning the connection between any language and the expression of thought.

In their case, too, we start from a mental state (*e*), which the speaker of an auditory signal wishes to generate in a hearer. The name for any mental state in Stoicism is 'rational impression'. Let us assume, like Seneca (p. 242 above), that the mental state to be communicated is my seeing Cato walking. What I now want to do is to tell you (we are both speakers of English) that Cato is walking. In accepting the evidence of my eyes, I have (at least implicitly) assented to the *lekton* that is the propositional counterpart to my visual perception—the proposition that Cato is walking. This proposition has the semantic form (SF) of a predication (subject or nominative case, and predicate), and it can be spoken in a way that conveys this semantic form because it has the corresponding grammatical form (GF) of a proper name—signifying a 'peculiar quality'—and a syntactically related verb. This grammatical form, in its turn, has a phonetic configuration (PF) in the structure of the articulated utterances or expressions, 'Cato' and 'is walking'. Because we are both speakers of English, I know that you know how to put these utterances together as a sentence (GF) that expresses my *lekton* (SF). The result is that when you hear

me utter my utterance, 'Cato is walking' you experience a rational impression the semantic form of which is that Cato is walking.

What I am suggesting, then, is that the Stoic concepts of *lexis*, *logos* (in the sense semantic utterance), and *lekton* pick out three necessarily interconnected levels of linguistic structure. If that is right, it seems reasonable to credit the Stoics with a theory of language that went a good way towards recognizing the combination of operations obtaining between phonological, grammatical, and semantic form.[28]

[28] Cf. the remarks about phonology, grammar, and semantics in Lyons 1968, 53–4.

13

The Stoics on world-conflagration
and everlasting recurrence

In his book *On providence* Chrysippus, the most learned and rigorous of Stoic philosophers, discussed the recurrence of the world. 'Since this is so,' he went on, 'it is evidently not impossible that we too, after our death, will return to the shape we now are, when certain periods of time have elapsed.'[1] The less cautious reporters of orthodox Stoic doctrine retail this 'possibility' as a firm tenet of the school. Here is the picturesque account in Nemesius of Emesa, a bishop writing in the fourth or fifth centuries of our era:[2]

The Stoics say that when the planets return to the same celestial sign, in length and breadth, where each was originally when the world was first formed, at set periods of time they cause conflagration and destruction of existing things. Once again the world returns anew to the same condition as before; and when the stars are moving again in the same way, each thing which occurred in the previous period will come to pass with no difference [from its previous occurrence]. For again there will be Socrates and Plato and each one of mankind with the same friends and fellow citizens. They will suffer the same things, and encounter the same things, and put their hand to the same things, and every city and village and piece of land will return in the same way. The periodic return of everything occurs not once but many times; or rather, the same things return infinitely and without end. The gods who are not subject to destruction, from their knowledge of this single period, know from it everything that is going to be in the next periods.[3] There will be nothing strange

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[1] Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 7.23 (LS 52A).   [2] Nemesius, *Nat. hom.* 309, 5–311, 2 (LS 52C).
[3] 'Gods who are not subject to destruction' must refer to Zeus, the Stoics' everlasting 'active principle' or *logos*, as distinct from the four elements which only exist for the duration of any one temporally finite world. See Chapter 6 of this volume, p. 123.

in comparison with what occurred previously, but everything will be the same with no difference down to the smallest details.[4]

This everlasting renewal of the world we now inhabit is always preceded by *ekpyrōsis*, a conflagration so mighty that nothing escapes its effects.[5] An infinite cycle of conflagrations terminates the existence of the infinitely recurrent worlds. So it goes on, and has always gone on, and will always go on, world and conflagration without end. Some later Stoics had their doubts, or gave up the doctrine altogether in favour of the existing world's indestructibility.[6] Even Chrysippus, in the passage with which we started, is tentative about our own everlasting recurrence. Can that master of dialectic have seriously indulged in speculations, not to say firm doctrines, so bizarre, so apparently pointless or ridiculous either as science or as protreptic for the rationally based moral life? Though much progress has been made in clarifying the historical and dialectical context of the conflagration and everlasting recurrence, further defence of the Stoics on these issues must take account of many negative votes by historians of philosophy.[7]

Plainly, the everlasting recurrence of this world and ourselves is an affront to common-sense views of time and change and identity. The Stoics can justly be charged with talking nonsense if their thesis compounds unreasonableness with hopeless reasoning. They should, nonetheless, be permitted to state their case before our prejudices of what is plausible take over. We should also remember that physicists and philosophers, within the past century, have defended comparable theories, and that circular or closed time has its modern defenders.[8] Above all, we need to interpret any Stoic thesis about the physical world within parameters set by the problems and possible explanations of

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[4] For further evidence, see *SVF* 2.596–32, LS ch. 52, and Mansfeld 1979 and 1981.

[5] 'Only matter and god [i.e. the two everlasting principles] survive in the conflagration', Alexander Aphr., *Mixt.* 226, 16–19 (*SVF* 2.1047).

[6] Cf. Philo, *Aet. mundi* 76–7 (LS 46P), who records the doubts of Diogenes of Babylon and Zeno of Tarsus, and the recantation of two later Stoics, Boethus of Sidon and Panaetius. See Mansfeld 1979, 156–7.

[7] The progress is due to Hahm 1977, 185–99, and above all to Mansfeld 1979, each of whom is more concerned with the conflagration than with everlasting recurrence. I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to their studies. For negative assessments, see Sandbach 1975, Lapidge 1978, and Barnes 1978.

[8] For a survey of theories of 'eternal return' from antiquity up to modern times, see Capek 1967, and for antiquity itself, Sorabji 1983, 182–90. The conflagration reminds Sambursky 1963, 200 f., of 19th-century ideas of the 'thermic death' of the universe. As recently as 1981 Lovell (p. 180) wrote: 'We cannot say from the present state of theory and observation whether the universe is open or closed. That is, whether the expansion will continue for ever and the universe will cease to exist except in a form of unavailable energy or whether the universe will eventually collapse to another superdense state similar to that from which it evolved.'

ancient science. With these provisos, I propose to show that these aspects of Stoic cosmology are less foolish than they have often been judged to be. More specifically, I will argue that the everlasting recurrence of the world, together with the exact replication of ourselves, is an inevitable consequence of mainstream Stoic thinking on causation, time, physical process, and theology. So far from being baldly assumed, or defectively argued, the world-conflagration and everlasting recurrence appear to be over-determined by a convergence of considerations from Stoic philosophy. Nor is it impossible, I shall suggest at the end, that Chrysippus will live and die again.

Even if I am right in all this, however, the overall purport of such doctrines clamours for explanation. Did Stoic philosophers regard everlasting recurrence as a feature of the world to be viewed with optimism, resigned acceptance, or sheer indifference? Has it any psychological or ethical significance in Stoicism which might be usefully compared with Nietzsche's similar thought?[9] Should we perhaps regard everlasting recurrence as a doctrine which Chrysippus, though obliged to envision for a plethora of reasons, would have been happier to do without? These are questions that deserve tentative answers. I shall not attempt to pursue them far, since so much requires clarification on the dialectical context of the conflagration and everlasting recurrence. But it is possible to sketch some lines of enquiry, which would show why the apparent pointlessness and certain monotony of our living, as we do, time and again fits a Stoic conception of the moral life.

THE DIALECTICAL CONTEXT OF STOIC COSMOLOGY

Stoic cosmology offers itself as a rival to two powerful alternatives, Aristotelian and Epicurean, to which it is related as something of a mid-point between two extremes. The Stoic world, like Aristotle's, is a finite continuum, without any empty space within itself. Like Aristotle again, the Stoics regarded the world as a teleologically ordered system which derives its structure and activity from a divine and intelligent first principle. In the Epicurean world, by contrast, atoms and void constitute a discrete universe of infinite size from which intelligent direction and divine purpose are emphatically excluded. Thus far Stoic cosmology inclines towards the Aristotelian extreme. Stoic philosophers, however, were as emphatic as Epicurus in requiring that causal interactions can take place only between bodies, that there are no incorporeal substances,

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[9] On Nietzsche cf. Nehamas 1980 and Kain 1983.

and that the world is fully constituted by matter in motion. Yet in spite of its position intermediate between Aristotle and Epicurus, Stoic cosmology is completely distinctive in its biological orientation.[10] Their divine and intelligent first principle stands to the world's matter as its formative and energizing power, in a relation the Stoics described as that of soul to body. The Stoic divinity, as the soul of the world, pervades all matter, with the result that every state of affairs can be ultimately analysed as an activity in the life of the intelligent first principle. Aristotle had already made powerful use of the notion of ends and essences which are internal to living beings, directing their life from within, but he had insisted on keeping his prime mover quite separate from the physical world. In Stoicism the divine active principle functions within the world as the indwelling cause of *all* determinate beings.

Stoic cosmology, then, is neither a lifeless, purposeless, and mechanistic system, like that of Epicurus, nor does it involve the remote control of an Aristotelian prime mover. It can well be described as a cosmo-biology, a system in which the basic model for understanding all natural processes is drawn from the vital functions of living beings. The heat or energy which accounts for their life is assumed to be only one manifestation of a cosmic heat or energy, endowed with intelligence and supreme organizing power. There were Platonic precedents for this cosmo-biology, and I shall have further occasion to refer to Plato's *Timaeus.* Vital heat too is a concept scarcely original to Stoicism.[11] But it was their innovation, I surmise, with some help from their interpretation of Heraclitus, to turn vital heat or fire into a principle closer to elementary thermodynamics than to anything resembling a fire that burns.[12] Though the Stoics had no precise concepts of force and energy, they adumbrated a notion which can be instructively compared with Francis Bacon's statement in the *Novum organum* that 'the very essence of heat, or the substantial self of heat, is motion and nothing else'.[13] This is at least part of what they were striving to express, even though they represented heat as an utterly tenuous and mobile body—fire or *pneuma.*

How far it is proper to align Stoic dynamics with modern physical theory, as Sambursky (1959) boldly proposed, I must leave to historians of science. The point I wish to bring out here is that the measure of any such anticipations

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[10] The history and significance of this orientation are well brought out by Hahm 1977, ch. 5.
[11] For the historical background, cf. Hahm 1977, 140 ff.
[12] For the Stoics' interpretation of Heraclitus, see Long 1975–6.
[13] 'Intelligatur hoc … quod calor, sive *quid ipsum* caloris, sit motus et nihil aliud', *Novum organum* 2.20.

must pay due account to the biological inspiration of the Stoics' recourse to heat as a unifying active principle. Granted the propriety of treating the whole world, however broadly, as a living organism, the Stoics were required to make decisions on the extent and nature of its life-history. Changes to the earth's surface, recession of seas, and mortality of land-animal species may have been among the empirical phenomena which persuaded them that the present world can be of only limited duration.[14] Or, in more formal terms, they inferred the perishability of the present world *as a whole* from its having had a temporal origin and from the observed perishability of its parts.[15] Such a conclusion is likely to have reinforced, if it did not precede, the conception of the world as a living being, with a temporal history. Thus the Stoics had to face questions about the world's growth and decay, its origins and its end.

These were matters that had engaged Greek thinkers from the very outset of the enquiry into nature. From two of the pioneers, Heraclitus and Empedocles, the Stoics could draw support for their view that the world we inhabit is an evolving and finite structure, a state of affairs whose beginning and development and end are explicable by the activity of everlasting elementary powers.[16] An evolving world is the standard conception in pre-Socratic cosmology, and in no case does it involve creation out of or dissolution into nothing. The refusal to entertain either of these horrors, and the conception of the world as evolving within temporal limits, were principal factors in promoting the earliest Greek support for cyclical recurrence. For reasons that it would distract us to pursue here, an evolving world found no favour with Plato or Aristotle. Yet it would be quite mistaken to regard Stoic cosmology as a simple-minded return to early Greek models, untroubled by reflection on Academic or Peripatetic alternatives.[17] While Chrysippus could not accept the view of the *Timaeus* that the present world-order will continue for ever, he was quite ready to appropriate passages from that book which explained regular cosmic changes in terms of biological growth and decay. Plato (*Timaeus*. 33c) had stressed the self-sufficiency of the world, saying

[14] These are included in four arguments opposed by Theophrastus, but not explicitly attributed to Stoics; Philo, *Aet. mundi*. 117–45. Graeser 1975, 187–206, takes Zeno, the Stoa's founder, to be Theophrastus' target, but against this see Sedley 1998, ch. 6.

[15] DL 7.14 = LS 46J.

[16] Stoic interest in Empedocles as well as Heraclitus is well attested, cf. *SVF* 2. p. 255, 18; *SVF* 2. 673. In later antiquity Heraclitus was regularly credited with a doctrine of *ekpyrōsis.* The tendency has been to regard this as a Stoicizing interpretation, but the correctness of the attribution to Heraclitus has its defenders, e.g. Kahn 1979, 134–8.

[17] The need to interpret Stoic cosmology in the light of Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines has been amply demonstrated by Hahm 1977 and Mansfeld 1979.

that 'it was designed to supply its own nourishment from its own decay, and to be both recipient and agent of everything'. Chrysippus took this over, remarking that 'the world-order alone is said to be self-sufficient, because it alone contains everything it needs; and it gets its nourishment and growth from itself by the interchange of its different parts into one another'.[18] The creative fire or Stoic deity, moreover, plays the organizing role of the Platonic demiurge. Yet while Plato represents the demiurge as a quasi-mythical creator, who manufactures the world's contents on the model of transcendent Forms, the Stoic deity creates by means of his own 'seminal principles' (*spermatikoi logoi*), shaping matter by being permanently blended with it.[19]

If the Stoics interpreted the *Timaeus* in the way that Aristotle did, they would have found Plato a supporter of a literal creation of the world.[20] The everlasting existence of the present world-order was a new and controversial thesis in Zeno's youth. Aristotle was its champion, and he claimed no predecessor. In his view, all thinkers, including Plato, 'agree that the world has had a beginning'. It was one of Aristotle's greater concerns, and greatest triumphs as he saw it, to have conclusively refuted creationism. In *On the heavens* 1.10, Aristotle identifies five theses:

1. The world had a beginning but will go on for ever.
2. The world had no beginning but will perish (implicit in 280a29).
3. The world had a beginning and will perish.
4. The world is alternately combined and dissolved.
5. The world had no beginning and will have no end.

Aristotle firmly rejects the first three theses. What interests us here is his assessment of the fourth thesis, 'alternate combination and dissolution'. 'This view', he says, 'is no different from making the world everlasting, merely changing its shape.' He likens it to the cycle of growth and reproduction, whereby the evolution, child–man–new child, may be treated as a destruction of the anterior, from one temporal perspective, or from a different one, the existence of the posterior.[21] His inclination to reduce the 'alternation' thesis to his own position emerges still more clearly as he continues: 'If then the body as a whole, being continuous, is disposed and ordered now in this way and now in that, and the structure of the whole is the world, then it will not be the world that comes into being and perishes, but its dispositions only.'[22] What

[18] Plutarch, *St. rep.* 1052C (LS 46D).
[19] Aetius 1.7, 33 (LS 46A), Origen, *Cels.* 4.48 (LS 46E).   [20] Aristotle, *Cael.* 1.280a30.
[21] Ibid. 280a12–15.   [22] Ibid. 280a20–23.

he excludes as absolutely impossible is a once-only generation and destruction of the world as a whole; any creationist, he insists, must postulate a 'turning-back' to a pre-cosmic state, from which creation would begin and which, he implies, must follow the world's destruction.[23]

Aristotle attributes the thesis of everlasting alternation to Heraclitus and Empedocles.[24] At this point of *On the heavens* he is not interested in refuting them at length. Their position, as he presents it, unlike that of Plato, is at least compatible with the logical requirements of his own 'everlasting' thesis. We should also remind ourselves that Aristotle's brilliant arguments against a beginning or an end of cosmic motion, as developed in the later *Physics*, could be accepted fully by any cosmologist who was prepared to argue, as the Stoics did, that our present world-order is not the world as a whole, but merely the *diakosmēsis*, a finitely lasting phase of the *kosmos* simpliciter, whose existence continues uninterruptedly.[25] There is no beginning or end of cosmic motion in Stoic physics, no alternating periods of motion and rest, to which Aristotle objected in Empedocles.

But here I anticipate somewhat. For our understanding of the cosmological options which were open to the Stoics, Aristotle's *On the heavens* is important because he has not blocked an alternative to his 'everlasting' thesis, an alternative, moreover, of a kind which could not fail to attract thinkers who were as committed as he to cosmic order and regular periodicities but unable to accept his view of the everlastingness of the present world. The early Stoics fully endorsed all the conditions which the 'alternating' thesis, according to Aristotle, would have to meet. First, no generation or destruction of the world *as a whole*: this condition is satisfied by the distinction just mentioned between everlasting *kosmos* and intermittent *diakosmēsis*, though there are problems about how this distinction can be made intelligible in terms of time.[26] Second, the Stoic world *is* the whole continuum of body. Third, and most significantly for our enquiry into everlasting recurrence, the Stoics fully

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[23] Aristotle, *Cael.* 280a23–27.   [24] Ibid. 279b16–17.

[25] DL 7.137 (LS 44F), which sanctions the use of the term *kosmos* also for the *diakosmēsis*, as is frequently found in Stoic texts.

[26] For instance, what kind of cosmic clock or intelligible measure of change exists during the conflagration? Philo, *Aet. mundi* 54 (LS 52A) suggests that a 'quibbling Stoic' might take the motion, of which time is the measure or dimension, to include that of 'the world imagined at the conflagration'. The continuity of time during the conflagration is required by its infinity (*SVF* 2.509). Perhaps god's providential thoughts (see below p. 269) may be taken to proceed in such a way that thought B occurs after thought A and before thought C, thus providing a temporal series both for the activity of the conflagration and for conflagrations occurring before and after one another.

embraced the stipulation that the order which results from each new cosmogony is always essentially the same, an instance of 'turning back' to how things were before.[27] Eusebius tells us that the Stoics wanted 'conflagration' to be understood not as 'destruction' simpliciter, but as a form of 'natural change'.[28]

It is impossible, from the state of our evidence, to reconstruct an order of priorities in the Stoics' cosmological reasonings. What is more, it may be a mistake to suppose that there was such an order. Their defences of the system were regularly appeals to its coherence; and the best test of their success is to see how well a given doctrine, such as the conflagration, a single *explanans*, fits a variety of *explananda*. We have identified only some of these thus far; and now, before we leave Plato and Aristotle behind, further *explananda* that they bequeathed demand brief discussion.

First, we should separate the conflagration hypothesis itself from the more general question of cyclical recurrence. That events *within* the world, most conspicuously the solar year and seasonal movements, are such a phenomenon, was a datum of supreme importance to Plato and Aristotle.[29] In Plato's later writings we also find several references to longer-term repeated catastrophes which destroy much of mankind by fire or deluge. In *Timaeus* 22c Plato rationalizes the Phaethon myth as an expression of the truth that celestial movements shift course, over long intervals, causing things on earth to be destroyed by much fire. In a different context of the *Timaeus*, Plato speaks of 'the perfect year', whose completion is signified by the sun, moon, and five planets returning to the same relative position, as measured by what Plato calls 'the orbit of the Same'.[30] Plato plainly did not connect the completion

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[27] e.g. LS 52C–D. My interpretation of the relation between Aristotle's review of opinions in *On the heavens* and the Stoics' cosmic cycle is close to that given by Hahm 1977, 190–4, who should be consulted on the pre-Aristotelian background. But I do not agree with his statement (p. 193) that 'the Stoic theory is an exact repetition of the theory Aristotle expressed in *On the heavens* (1.10.280a 11–23), with only a slight change in some of the terminology'. The Stoics do reject the eternity of the cosmos in the sense of cosmos that Aristotle understands, nor does he actually approve the cosmic cycles he attributes to Heraclitus and Empedocles. The Stoics' evolutionary cosmogony was a radical rejection of Aristotelianism, and it loses none of its revisionary character if they succeeded in turning Aristotle's assessment of the 'alternation' thesis to their own advantage. It seems to me highly likely that the early Stoics knew Aristotle's work; but we do not *know* that they did. The comparison between that text and their cosmology is instructive, even if their theory was not developed by direct reflection on Aristotle's text.

[28] Eusebius, *PE* 15.18.2 (LS 46K).   [29] Cf. Solmsen 1960, 420–39.

[30] *Tim.* 39d. A similar claim, in association with the occurrence of cataclysms, is attributed to Aristotle in writings lost to us; cf. Hahm 1977, n. 2, 195 f. I suspect that at least the astronomy is a misreporting under later Stoic influence.

of this 'great year' with a cosmic conflagration; for the terrestrial burning he previously mentioned is linked with a 'shift' in the celestial movements. But within Zeno's lifetime that connection appears to have been made by the Babylonian Berosus, whose account of astrology strongly stimulated Greek interest in that subject. According to Seneca, Berosus said: 'earthly things will burn when all the planets which now move in different orbits come together in the sign of Cancer, and are so distributed that a straight line can pass through all their spheres.'[31] Stoics, who were probably influenced by Berosus' doctrine, must have concluded that it presupposed a conflagration for every occurrence of the same planetary conjunctions. We are in no position to understand the reasons for connecting the conflagration with a specific celestial configuration. What matters, for our attempt to do justice to Stoic speculations, is the recognition that the concepts they presuppose—very long-term cyclical changes drastically affecting the earth, and their causal connection with theoretically computable celestial periodicities—seemed utterly plausible to many contemporary philosophers and astronomers.

Next, we need to take note of Aristotle's intense support for cyclical regularity, provided he can limit its scope within the confines of one everlasting world. The significance of 'man begets man' for his metaphysics and biology is too familiar to need comment. It would hardly be an exaggeration, however, to say that cyclical motion, from the sun's diurnal rotation, through the transformations of the elements and animal reproduction, and extending to meteorological phenomena, is his prime evidence of a rationally based and fixed cosmic order.[32] Now this, by itself, does nothing to sanction the Stoic conception of everlastingly repeated worlds, though whoever wrote the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems* question concerning 'before' and 'after' was quite prepared to countenance the cyclical recurrence of perishable beings.[33]

[31] See Chapter 7 above, p. 129. Berosus also envisaged a great deluge when the planets converge in the sign of Capricorn. In Stoic cosmogony the subsidence of the conflagration gives rise to a totally watery state (see Hahm 1977, 186), but no planets can have existed at that time. What Seneca describes in *NQ* 3.27–8 is the 'fated day' of a deluge that will overwhelm most of the earth; i.e. it occurs within a world-period.

[32] Cf. Solmsen 1960, 387–9.

[33] *Prob.* 17, 916a18–39. The problem posed is the understanding of 'before' and 'after'. Are the people who existed at Troy absolutely 'before' us? Or do 'perishable beings' live and die repeatedly, like the circular movements of the heavenly bodies? In the latter case, the repetition could not be of what is numerically the same; that would be utterly 'naive'. But it could be of what is the same 'in form' (cf. *GC* 2.11, 338b13). The author concludes that, on such a model, 'we ourselves' would exist 'before', and that there would be no basis for saying that the people at Troy were before us nor we before them.

Yet the *Meteorology* reveals Aristotle's own awareness that cases can be made for supposing the whole world to be in process of change.[34] Anyone wanting to retain a broadly Aristotelian conception of cosmic order, but who found the evidence in favour of an evolutionary world compelling, could be tempted to extend cyclical regularity to the present world as a whole, rather than to just some of its contents.

In order not to threaten the everlasting stability of the world, Aristotle was forced to maintain that terrestrial changes do not affect the superlunary domain. His insistence that the earth is too small for its changes to affect the *whole* world is an observation the Stoics would have done well to heed.[35] But Aristotle was inviting challenge when he allowed his stable world to accommodate 'a great winter', with accompanying deluge, to occur at determinate intervals, and when he conceded that there must be 'some change of the whole', though one which stops short of generation and destruction, 'since the universe persists'.[36] By the time he wrote the *Meteorology* he had rejected the view, later accepted by the Stoics, that moist exhalations from the earth nourish the heavens.[37] It is possible, however, that they found Aristotle supporting this doctrine in his early work *On philosophy.*[38] In Stoicism the world-conflagration is physically explained as a consequence of evaporation becoming complete under the prevailing influence of celestial heat. Aristotle had to erect a firm barrier between celestial and terrestrial physics in order to protect his system against such dangers.

As an intellectual construction, Aristotle's everlasting and non-evolving world is ingeniously defended. Yet even within the perspectives available to him, he had to ignore a good many phenomena uncomfortable to his theory and to postulate an ad hoc discontinuity between the heavens and the sublunar region. This latter step was one the Stoics were not disposed to take. Their strict view of causation within a continuum made it impossible to suppose that the world as a whole can be unaffected by any changes, however small and apparently localized: 'a drop of wine will blend with the whole ocean', as Chrysippus maintained, 'and even with the whole world', against Aristotle's claim that the larger volume cannot be affected by the qualities of the smaller.[39] With hindsight the general characteristics of Stoics cosmology—condensation of matter, followed by world-formation, and expansive combustion—suggest a more imaginative foreshadowing of modern scientific

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[34] *Mete.* 1.14, esp. 352a17.   [35] Ibid. 352a26–8.   [36] Ibid. 352a28–32, 352b17–18.
[37] Ibid. 2.2; for the Stoic doctrine cf. *SVF* 2.652, 663, 690, and Hahm 1977, 189.
[38] Cf. Solmsen 1960, 408 n. 58.   [39] Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1078E (LS 48B).

intuitions. But for our understanding of the dialectical context, that is not to the point. The Stoics were as committed as Plato and Aristotle to a teleologically ordered world, whose rationality and systematic structure is the best possible. Their immediate predecessors had totally rejected the possibility that such a world could cease to exist. So, as Mansfeld (1979) has ably shown, we can expect the Stoics to have defences against the charge that the eventual destruction of the present world is totally incompatible with the divine providence of the beneficent divinity who created it. Those expectations will not be disappointed.

THE RATIONALITY AND PROVIDENCE OF THE CONFLAGRATION AND EVERLASTING RECURRENCE

If we consider the conflagration as a purely physical process, the basic data can be briefly summarized. The world as a whole is an everlasting alternation between a state of extreme condensation (A) and a state of extreme rarefaction (B). Intermediate between A and B is the occurrence of the present world and its innumerable predecessors and successors. The alternation is a result of the constant conjunction of everlasting fire and everlasting matter. State A arises when matter is transformed by fire into the dense elements, earth and water, as a result of which only a residue of fire survives.[40] This residue is sufficient to be fuelled by its products, and by transforming some matter into air, a world of four elements arises. To counterbalance the previous process of condensation, a reciprocal phase of rarefaction develops as fire gradually converts all other parts of the world into combustible material. This gives rise to state B, the conflagration.

What I have offered here is an artificially simple construction, deliberately omitting biological and theological aspects, in order to isolate the essence of the Stoics' purely physical intuitions. With its focus on rigorously balanced transformations it suggests something analogous to the conservation of energy, a comparison aptly made in reference to Heraclitus, whom the Stoics took as their dominant mentor in physics.[41] Looked at in this way, the conflagration is an essential component of the Stoics' conception of material transformations. More specifically, the Stoics argued that there must come a time when celestial

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[40] DL 7.135 (LS 47B); Plutarch, *St. rep.* 1053B (LS 46F).
[41] Cf. Wiggins 1982, 16–18.

fire, which feeds off terrestrial moisture, will dry up and consume the earth.[42] In a brief fragment of Zeno, recovered by Mansfeld, we find the following argument used to justify the conflagration. 'Everything which burns and has something to burn will burn it completely; now the sun is a fire, and will it not burn what it has?'[43] In another text we can read of the sun converting the other heavenly bodies into itself.[44] This process leads to a vast expansion of the world, with gravitational attractions, as we should call them, being relaxed, and void space outside the world coming to be occupied.[45] What seems to be envisaged here is a vast diffusion of what might broadly be called pure energy. This may be reflected in Chrysippus' suggestion that the state of things at the conflagration is incandescent, a change into light.[46]

The physics I have just sketched seems the obvious starting-point for reflection on the conflagration, since that state of affairs is plainly regarded as a physical process. Stoic physics, however, just because it lacks any precisely established concepts of dynamics or quantifiable measures of change, is a theory whose explanatory power is partly metaphorical; it can be compared to a translation system whereby physical processes are converted into terms which are wider in their significance than the physical domain that they primarily name. 'Tension' is both a pneumatic state of matter, and the moral and mental state of a person.[47] The conflagration is a physical process, but it is also a phase in the life of god. One of these references is not privileged over the other. I began by noting that everlasting recurrence is over-determined in Stoic thought. It is time to flesh it out with biology and theology; for these are inextricably linked with the physics of combustion.

A further qualification is needed. For ease of exposition I have spoken, as Stoics regularly did, as if their god were straightforwardly identical with fire. This is an over-simple statement of their position. First of all, they distinguished between the fire of ordinary experience and what they called 'designing fire'.[48] This latter, the life-sustaining principle, is the fire which combines with air in the *pneuma* that holds the world together, and which forms the substance of the heavenly bodies. It is 'designing fire' which is predicated of

[42] Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Ar. Mete.* 61, 34–62, 11 (*SVF* 2.594); cf. Mansfeld 1979, 150 f., for other evidence.
[43] Alexander Lycopolis, ed. Brinkmann (Teubner) XII p. 19, lines 2–4 (LS 46I); cf. Mansfeld 1979, 146 ff.
[44] Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1075D (LS 46L), attributed to Cleanthes.
[45] *SVF* 2.537, 609–10.   [46] Philo, *Aet. mundi* 90 (LS 46M).
[47] For tension (*tonos*) in reference to states of the soul, cf. *SVF* 1.563, 877, etc.
[48] Stobaeus 1.213, 15–21 (LS 46D).

god. Secondly, this sentence is to be construed as a significant predication, and not a statement that god and designing fire are identical concepts.[49] Moreover, the Stoics' separation of the concepts god and fire is stronger than would be implied by the non-tautologous statement, 'energy is heat'. Most basically, god is the active principle of the world and conceptually distinct, as such, from the passive principle, matter. God is spoken of as designing fire because designing fire is the necessary consequence of god's constant conjunction with matter. We could say that fire is the manifestation or form of god's activity in matter. But, from a metaphysical viewpoint, god as the active principle is prior to fire. This is of the utmost significance for our enquiry. It implies that questions about the conflagration are ultimately questions about god's craftsmanlike activity and his design for the world. The inevitability of the conflagration and everlasting recurrence, though explicable in the physical terms we have considered, will finally depend upon the nature of god. We are to suppose that god's everlasting activity in totally formless matter is the most basic fact about the world. The conflagration is a consequence of god's design taking the law-like form of a physical process; it is not an antecedent which sets constraints in advance on that design. Hence we should expect to find the conflagration and everlasting recurrence strongly attached to the life and providence of god.

I began this study by quoting Chrysippus' book *On providence.* In the same work he discussed the conflagration in terms of the growth of the world-soul, whose 'commanding-faculty' he located in the purest aetherial fire of the heavenly region.[50]

Since death is the separation of soul from body, and the soul of the world is not separated but grows continuously until it has completely used up its matter on itself, the world must not be said to die.[51]

This passage refers to the same events as Zeno's argument, mentioned above, concerning the sun's eventual consumption of everything. But, whereas Zeno's physicalist account of the sun's expansion affords no comfort to those who might be troubled by the destruction of the present world, Chrysippus' bio-logical account of god's growth is explicitly intended to explain why the conflagration is not a destruction of the *kosmos.* God, unlike other living beings, does not suffer separation of soul from body. Rather, his soul grows by cannibalizing its own body, and so the whole *kosmos* becomes divine soul. This absorption of body counts as a reason for the imperishability of the *kosmos.*

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[49] Cf. Sandbach 1975, 73–4.   [50] DL 7.139 (LS 47O), cf. *SVF* 2.642.
[51] Plutarch, *St. rep.* 1052C (LS 46E).

Does *kosmos* here mean 'world' in the sense of that which we now inhabit? Plainly not. Our present world is removed by god's absorption of all differentiated matter. What Chrysippus is anxious to counter is the objection that the conflagration, the growth of the divine soul, involves the unqualified destruction of the world.

Staying with Chrysippus' book *On providence*, we may now consider the state of the world immediately following the conflagration:

When the world is fiery through and through, it is directly both its own soul and commanding-faculty. But when, having changed into moisture and the soul which remains therein, it has changed in a way into body and soul, so as to be compounded out of these, it has got a different principle.[52]

Here again the concepts of soul and body are used to analyse cosmological phases. During the conflagration, the entire world is divine soul. (We recall Chrysippus' account of the conflagration as pure 'light'.) The cosmological stage which succeeds this, as the conflagration wanes, is a bipartition of the world into two principles, soul and moisture, which form, so to speak, a composite world consisting now of body as well as soul. Notice that it is the divine fire itself which is said to change into moisture and the 'residual soul'.[53] Chrysippus is mixing modes of description here, physical processes and biological functions. But an underlying unity is implicit, if we remember that the ultimate subject of discussion is divine self-transformations. Moisture no less than fire is a manifestation of god's conjunction with matter. For the purpose of his own life, or the design of the world, god has transformed himself into a composite of body and soul, where the latter is represented as a 'seed' or 'residue of fire', capable of putting the world-body to its instrumental uses.

In the light, or should one say vivid imagination, of these two texts, I turn to a third which is particularly interesting:

Chrysippus says that Zeus and the world are like a man, and providence is like his soul; so that when the conflagration comes, Zeus, being the only imperishable one among the gods, withdraws into providence, whereupon both, having come together, continue to occupy the single substance of aether.[54]

Plutarch quotes these lines with the aim of discomfiting the Stoics. It was a school doctrine that two peculiarly qualified individuals (*idiōs poia*) cannot

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[52] Cf. Hahm 1977, 60 ff.   [53] Cf. Hahm 1977, 60 ff.
[54] Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1077E (LS 28O).

occupy the same substance.[55] The statement that Zeus and providence *both* occupy aether at the conflagration is interpreted as a flagrant contradiction of the doctrine, one qualified individual only to one substance. Actually Chrysippus' analogies confirm it. If providence is like the soul, and god is like a man (a composite of body and soul) during the present world, then god's withdrawal into providence describes god's identity when he and the world are soul alone. The coming-together of Zeus and providence is not the coincidence of two distinct individuals, but a description of god's unitary existence as soul when the present world-body comes to an end.

What this passage adds to the two preceding Chrysippean texts on the divine soul and body of the world is the equations:

$$\text{world at the conflagration} = \text{god as pure soul} = \text{providence.}$$

The conflagration brings the present world to an end. So we now seem to have the essence of a Stoic answer to criticisms concerning the compatibility of divine providence and our world's ending. Paradoxically, as it may appear, the conflagration completely instantiates god's providence. Later Stoics reflected on this point. Seneca asks:

What kind of life will a wise man have if he is abandoned by his friends . . . or cast out onto a desert shore? It will be like the life of Jupiter, at the time when the world is dissolved and the gods have been blended together into one, when nature comes to a stop for a while; he reposes in himself given over to his thoughts.[56]

Epictetus adds the further detail: Zeus contemplates the nature of his government and is occupied with thoughts appropriate to himself.[57]

Our world has come to an end. In due course it will recur in exactly the same form. Between these two worlds Zeus is firing away with providential thoughts. These thoughts, on the evidence of Stoic and Greek usage of *pronoia*, combine foreknowledge and advance planning. God knows all that will happen, and he plans out all that will happen. Because he is also the universal cause, efficiently affecting matter, he executes what he foreknows and plans. His divine providence is supremely beneficial to the world, and to rational beings in particular. Its three principal objectives, according to the Stoic spokesman in Cicero's *De natura deorum* 2.58, are: the world's survival, its absolute self-sufficiency, and its consummate beauty. Once again the legacy

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[55] Philo, *Aet. mundi* 48–51 (LS 28P); cf. Sedley 1982.
[56] Seneca, *Ep.* 9.16 (LS 46O).   [57] Epictetus, 3.13.4–7.

of Plato's *Timaeus* is conspicuous.[58] In that Ciceronian context, the world's survival refers to the present state of the cosmos. No problem is apparently presented by the future conflagration (cf. *ND* 2.118). Nor does any Stoic text suggest that this is other than an event of the remote future.[59] The obvious interpretation of the evidence is surely this: the conflagration is providential since, *sub specie aeternitatis*, it preserves the present world by constantly reconstituting it.

But why destroy the present world if its preservation is the object of divine providence? My own answer is that this question misfires by importing connotations of 'destruction' which the Stoics did not admit. Before developing that point, we should notice a radically different answer that has been proposed. In his elegant and pioneering study of the problem, Mansfeld suggests that Zeno and his two immediate successors conceived the conflagration itself to be the best possible state of affairs.[60] This is the condition of the world when god, as soul and providence, achieves his maximum growth and becomes coextensive with everything. Consequently, Mansfeld argues, the Stoic deity has excellent reason to destroy the present world and replace it with the conflagration. In this way Zeno had a skilful rejoinder to Academic and Peripatetic objections that a creative deity would never destroy its own handiwork.[61] Zeno's problem, it now transpires, was *not* to explain the destruction of the present world, but extraordinarily, to account for its generation, which proves to be a return to an inferior state. Here, Mansfeld argues, Zeno was saved by his non-transcendental theology, his treatment of god as a physical being whose fiery nature is subject to the laws of physics. For the conflagration to last for ever, there would have to be (as there cannot be) an infinite supply

[58] *Tim.* 29a (beauty), 33d (self-sufficiency), 33a (survival).

[59] The 'great year' attributed to Diogenes of Babylon was $365 \times 18,000$ solar years, Aetius 2.32.4 (*SVF* 3 Diogenes, 28). For the background to such computations, cf. Van der Waerden 1952.

[60] Mansfeld 1979, esp. 159–63, and 1981, 304–9. For reasons of space it is impossible for me to set out and comment on his discussions in the detail that they deserve. See also Salles 2005*a*, who supports Mansfeld's position concerning Chrysippus but argues interestingly that for Cleanthes the conflagration is a necessary side-effect of god's primary end of sustaining the generated world.

[61] I have no difficulty in accepting Mansfeld's hypothesis that Zeno developed his cosmology in partial opposition to Plato, *Tim.* 41ab, and Aristotle, *On philosophy*, as preserved in Philo, *Aet. mundi* 20–4 (= Aristotle fr. 19a Ross) and 39–43 (= Aristotle fr. 19c Ross). In the last of these texts, Aristotle apparently argued by elimination that god would have no reason to destroy a world he had made. The possible reasons for so doing that are eliminated are: (1) to cease from cosmogony, (2) to change his previous purpose, (3) to make a worse world, (4) to make a similar world, (5) to make a better world. On Mansfeld's reconstruction, Zeno will have opted for (4), with defences against Aristotle's objections to it: see Mansfeld 1979, 162–3.

of combustible material. To quote Mansfeld (1979, 161–2): 'there is, accordingly, a limit to the duration of matter in its best possible, i.e. wholly fiery and divine, state, just as there is a limit to the duration of the ordered universe.' This cyclical alternation, moreover, answers challenges attributable to Aristotle (see n. 61 above) concerning the motives for creating a new world after this one's destruction: 'no change, for better or for worse, of god's nature is involved, if the re-created universe is, both as to its structure and as to its history, the exact replica of its predecessor.'

Mansfeld's last point in my summary is cogent. Everlasting and uniform recurrence of the world, as we noticed in studying Aristotle *On the heavens*, could be construed as a variation on Aristotle rather than a gross departure from him. I wholly agree with Mansfeld's proposal to set Stoic cosmology within a context that exhibits Zeno and his successors responding to the arguments of Plato and Aristotle. Yet his general reconstruction of Zeno's position seems to land the Stoics with a paradox greater than any of their own making. To be sure, the conflagration is represented in our main sources as a wholly positive event. I can also agree that the conflagration is 'the best possible state of affairs' *for the time when it occurs.* But if the re-creation of the present world is 'a return to an inferior state', that implies it would be better if god stayed put and refrained from further cosmogony. Such inactivity, however, would make nonsense of god's essential nature as a provident and creative agent. Once having started, the conflagration appears to be directed towards forming the best possible world.[62] Viewed retrospectively, it is true, the conflagration is sometimes said to clean out all evil.[63] Such an idea provides the Stoic deity with a moral reason for not continuing the present world. But it is not an idea which makes the conflagration absolutely *or per se* superior to the created world. God is everlastingly present in every state of affairs, and it would be quite un-Stoic to measure the goodness of anything by its size. Hence the greater extension of god during the conflagration can hardly be a measure of its superiority to the created world. As to evil, the

[62] Cf. Aetius 1.7.33 (LS 46A), Aristocles, quoted by Eusebius, *PE* 15.14.2 (LS 46G), Dio Chrysostom 36.55 (*SVF* 2.622), where the onset of cosmogony is treated allegorically as 'the happy marriage of Zeus and Hera'.

[63] Apart from Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1067A (LS 46N), 'at the conflagration no evil at all remains, but the whole is then prudent and wise', evidence for the conflagration's 'purging' effect is unreliable for early Stoicism; cf. Mansfeld 1983, 220 f., who thinks 'that the assumption that the final conflagration is a *katharsis* is Christian'.

Stoics insisted that it is ineliminable from and necessary to the created world, and compatible with divine providence.[64] Its absence from the conflagration does not show that the created world is *thereby* inferior. Probably the early Stoics supposed that whatever state of affairs obtains at any given moment is the best state as viewed from a divine perspective.[65]

To sum up, the conflagration explains why the present world, as observation and physical theory suggest, will not endure for ever. Yet it is not, for that reason, an event to be feared. Given the physical constitution of things, the conflagration is the necessary counter-phase to the condensed and liquid state which originally produced the present world. These physical processes, moreover, are not laws of an undesigning, uncaring, or lifeless nature. On the contrary, they are quite literally acts of god, who works with a rational and beneficent plan for the good of the whole. The world at present is the object of that plan. Any such world can be of only finite duration. Therefore, to ensure the continuity of cosmic goodness, the present world is everlastingly re-created.

This conclusion is reinforced by the following text of Arius Didymus:[66]

Universal reason having advanced thus far, or universal nature having grown and increased, it finally dries up everything and takes it up into itself, and comes to be in the whole substance. It returns to the first spoken reason and to that resurrection which creates the greatest year, in which the reconstitution from itself alone into itself recurs.[67] Having returned because of the order from which it began to create the

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[64] The principal evidence is cited by Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1064E–1068D; for discussion see Long 1968 and Mansfeld 1979.

[65] I say 'early Stoics', in order to acknowledge that later members of the school were heretical on the whole issue of the conflagration (see n. 6 above), and in some cases attributed it not to god but to fire (a distinction untenable in early Stoicism), making god answerable only for creation, Philo, *Aet. mundi* 8 (*SVF* 2.620), cf. Mansfeld 1981, 307. The evidence which persuades Mansfeld 1979, 177, that for Chrysippus 'the state of affairs during total conflagration is far superior to that of the familiar, ordered universe', has largely been cited in the main body of this paper. A further objection that I have to his interpretation is more general. He finds in Stoicism anticipations of Gnostic views on the imperfection of our world (see Mansfeld 1981, 305–6). To me that seems an anachronistic reading of the main tenor of the evidence on the early Stoics' attitude to this world.

[66] Quoted by Eusebius, *PE* 15.19.1–2 (LS 52D).

[67] The language is obscure but defensible, I think. Mansfeld 1983, 229 f., finds particular difficulty with 'resurrection' (*anastasis*), on the grounds that a 'resurrection' should not be that *to* which nature returns since 'it can only begin *after* the grand unification', and further, that a resurrection, as part of the 'greatest year', can hardly be said to create this as a whole. I question whether the 'greatest year' is supposed to include the conflagration itself. Hence 'resurrection' may

world in just such a way, it manufactures the same way of life according to reason, since such periods occur everlastingly without ceasing.

What is described here is the causal nexus of a completely closed system. But instead of referring explicitly to such causation, the text places all its explanatory weight on universal rationality. We know that the causal nexus and universal rationality coincide in god. If the last event of the present world is causally connected with the conflagration, and the conflagration is a recurrence of exactly the state preceding the present world, the Stoics can establish cyclical recurrence from their principle of invariant causal connections.[68] It accords with the over-determinism of their cosmology that they should also represent it as an outcome of divine rationality. Such an explanation invites us to consider the conflagration and everlasting recurrence as in no sense automatic events. They are causally necessary, but the causes which necessitate them are enactments of reason. We need not suppose that god plans out the world afresh, like a human agent reviewing possible options. Each recurrence will repeat itself everlastingly. Yet every one of them is explicable as how it was to be if reason controls the world in the best possible way.

THE TIME OF EVERLASTING RECURRENCE

But what if reason has failed to establish even the possibility of the present world's everlasting recurrence? That, according to Barnes (1978), is the unpalatable outcome when we connect the doctrine with standard Stoic metaphysics. At stake here are the coherence and intelligibility of maintaining that the occupants and events of every future world are exactly the same as those of the present world. On this construal, everlasting recurrence requires that the Socrates who repeats himself time and again is the identical individual and

refer just to the initial state of affairs which determines the next cosmic cycle. Nor do I find it too difficult to speak of nature returning *to* a resurrection, meaning the restoration of that state of affairs. Mansfeld maintains that *anastasis* is Eusebius' Christian intrusion, which has displaced *anatasis*, 'extension', from Arius' text. If, however, the next Stoic world includes individual persons numerically identical to those in this world, it seems quite credible that Stoics themselves may have called the initial conditions of the next world 'resurrection', thus attracting Christian interpreters in the way that Mansfeld 1983 indicates.

[68] Cf. *SVF* 2.945–51. At *GC* 2.11, 337b33–338a17 Aristotle argues that the unconditional necessity of something's coming-to-be requires its everlasting recurrence. For the Stoics, though not of course for Aristotle, the coming-to-be of any particular substance is unconditionally necessary. For reasons of space, I cannot pursue this possible line of Aristotelian influence on Stoicism.

not an infinite series of Socratic clones.[69] Just he, the selfsame individual, is born, lives, and dies without the smallest difference of detail an infinite number of times—the son of Sophroniscus, 470–399 BC. Let us call this version of recurrence S1.

According to Alexander, the Stoics held that: 'after the conflagration all the same things recur in the world numerically (*kat' arithmon*), in such a way that even the same peculiarly qualified individual as before exists and comes to be again in that world, as Chrysippus says in his books *On the world.*'[70] And according to Simplicius, Stoics asked 'whether the "I" that I am now and the "I" that I am then are one in number, because they are the same in substance, or whether I am dispersed by the assignment to a succession of cosmogonies'.[71] Alexander's testimony and Simplicius' first alternative clearly endorse my S1 formulation. In Stoic metaphysics the individual Socrates is 'peculiarly qualified', which means that he can have no indistinguishable clone.[72] Something which 'is no different from' Socrates must be absolutely identical to Socrates. Even if the Stoics themselves did not characterize this identity as 'numerical', the formulation of S1 requires that. For, if the Socrates of the next world is not numerically identical to this world's Socrates, we not only lose Socrates' metaphysical uniqueness across worlds, we also get the fragmentation that Simplicius canvasses in his second alternative and thus no authentic recurrence of the same individual. In what follows, I shall assume that 'same peculiar individual' and 'no different individual' imply numerical identity.[73]

Our evidence also includes three other formulations of what it is that recurs:

S2: 'the same peculiarly qualified individual' but with 'external' and 'accidental' differences, such as having or not having a mole on one's face;[74]

S3: not Socrates but 'what is no different from Socrates', that is, indistinguishable tokens of the same type;[75]

[69] 'The same' and 'no different down to the smallest detail', Nemesius (above p. 256); 'the same persons under the same conditions', Tatian (*SVF* 1.109); 'samenesses that are no different both in respect to peculiarly qualified individuals and accidents', Origen, *Cels.* 4.12 (*SVF* 2.628).
[70] Alex. Aphr., *In Ar. APr.* 180, 33–6 (LS 52F).
[71] Simplicius, *In Ar. Phys.* 886, 12–16 (LS 52E).   [72] See Sedley 1982.
[73] Hence I do not agree with Gourinat 2002, 224–5, that 'numerical identity' is an inappropriate Peripatetic intrusion. If he were right, S3 would be the canonical formulation of the doctrine, but Origen, its source, negates S1 in saying of the Stoics, 'they don't want Socrates to recur but someone no different from Socrates'.
[74] Alex. Aphr., *In Ar. Apr.* 181, 25–31 (LS 52F). Contrast Origen's version in the previous note.
[75] Origen, *Cels.* 4.68 (LS 52G).

S4: very slightly different recurrences, probably meaning very slightly distinguishable tokens of the same type.[76]

S4 is explicitly said to be revisionary, to avoid embarrassment over 'no difference' in S3. Since the Stoics defended the identity of indiscernibles, it is difficult to see how S3 could be advanced as a serious alternative to or improvement on S1.[77] S2 is an interesting variation: it seeks to retain exact identity ('the same peculiarly qualified individual'), while allowing us to distinguish this world's Socrates from his recurrent self by a feature which is not essential to his being the identical man. However, as Barnes observes, anyone who defended S2 has apparently given up strict determinism, which leaves no room for even inessential differences between worlds.[78] Probably, S2–4 were all intended as responses to criticism of S1; the recurrence of exactly the same individual without the smallest difference. I agree with Barnes that we should assume S1 to be the original doctrine, which sets the strongest conditions for the sameness of what recurs. S1 is also the most intriguing thesis.

Barnes's critique runs as follows. The event E in our world K and the parallel event E* in the next world K* are distinct events if and only if the instants at which they occur, t and t*, are distinct. We might suppose that t and t* must be distinct instants because E* is situated in a world which does not exist before the end of the present world. But the Stoic theory of time excludes the possibility of distinguishing these instants. They regarded time as incorporeal, and this, Barnes holds, gives time no existence independently of the events which characterize it. So two instants will be separable if and only if the events which characterize one instant are distinguished in some way from the events which characterize the other instant. But, on the orthodox account of everlasting recurrence (i.e. S1), there is no difference at all between the events of any two worlds. Therefore there can be no difference between the instants of their occurrence. The infinity of successive worlds turns out to be only one world, unfolding in the same temporal extension. So it is quite impossible for Chrysippus to return to his present shape in another life.

The issue here is graver than Barnes acknowledges. If he is right, the whole of orthodox Stoic cosmology is utterly flawed. The present world itself would never get under way; for its causal conditions presuppose a counterpart world

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[76] Ibid. 5.20 (*SVF* 2.626). Barnes 1978, 10, assimilates this view to S2; but I take S4 to deny the 'numerical' identity which S2, according to Alexander, involves.

[77] Cf. Barnes 1978, 11.   [78] Ibid. 10.

as antecedent and consequent. That the outcome is so grave is further indicated by the presumption that Stoics who gave up the conflagration and everlasting recurrence (n. 6 above) were defenders of an everlasting world.

In the original version of this chapter I accepted Barnes' premise that Stoic theory disallows their characterizing times independently from the only mode of existence that they countenanced, viz. bodies and the bodily states with which they identified events and actions.[79] According to Barnes this has the consequence that, since the events of a putative future world are exactly identical to those of the present world, the times of that future world are no less identical and therefore the recurrence itself is an illusion. I argued that Barnes's inference is entirely valid on a linear conception of time, whereby any instant is absolutely before or after any other instant. On such a conception it certainly follows that, if Chrysippus' future life occurs at instants which are identical to those at which he is living now, he cannot be said to have a real future after his present existence.

If, however, the Stoics envisioned the time of any world to be circular and closed, as distinct from linear, Barnes' disturbing inference would not follow. For, in circular and closed time, as you go forward, you will eventually come to a time (future) which is the same as the present time; and if you go backwards, you will eventually come to a time (past) which is the same as the present time. In this circular conception, no time is absolute, and every time is both before and after itself. The time at which Chrysippus is living now is also future to itself, and so he would have a life after the present one, albeit in the same temporal extension that he currently occupies. What would remain absolute is the order in which the sequence of instants within any world is placed, so that the antecedent events of Chrysippus' past life *will* occur in just the same sequence of instants in which they *have* occurred.

Circular time is a logically coherent notion.[80] Unfortunately, it will not work as an adequate response to Barnes and a defence of the Stoic thesis of everlasting recurrence. In offering it to the Stoics as a hypothesis, the arguments I could adduce for their favouring it were inconclusive, and so I shall not replicate them here. In addition, there are two strong objections to giving up linear time for the everlasting world-recurrences. First, the Stoics declared the whole of time to be infinite, in the way that the whole of number is

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[79] *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 22 (1984), suppl. 13–37, and summarized in LS vol. 2, pp. 312–13.

[80] See Prior 1967, Newton-Smith 1980, and White 1985, 173–5. Barnes 1978, n. 64 is much too hasty in dismissing it as 'absurd'.

infinite, which fits linear rather than circular or closed time.[81] Second, and more important, the theory I offered them of a future occurring in the same time interval as the present does not represent any genuine repetition or recurrence or happening 'again', as all the statements of their position maintain.[82] For there to be a genuine succession of identical worlds, Chrysippus needs to repeat his life in a world that occupies a different time-span from the present.

The principal difficulty is the presumption, which I have endorsed, that what gets everlastingly repeated down to the smallest detail is tantamount to numerically identical. One solution that has been proposed restricts numerical identity to the recurring 'objects' (e.g. Chrysippus) as distinct from the 'events' involving these objects.[83] On this view, while the Chrysippus of any world is numerically identical to the Chrysippus of every world, what he does and experiences in any given world is identical *in type but not in number* to what he does and experiences in every other world. In that case, the numerically identical Chrysippus would do and experience an everlasting succession of type-identical but not numerically identical things. Because these things are type-identical they would be indistinguishable in content, from one world to another, but they could supposedly happen at genuinely different times.

I do not find this solution any more satisfying than my previous hypothesis concerning circular or closed time, nor is it better grounded, in my opinion, in the evidence. As I already remarked, the Stoics conceived of events and actions as bodily states.[84] There is no good reason to think that they treated the recurring body Chrysippus as numerically identical in every world but envisioned his recurring bodily states as only identical in type. Logical tidiness seems to require that we treat all identities internal to the recurrent worlds as either numerical or as repeated tokens of the same type.

My reason for positing closed time was the difficulty of construing futurity if the numerically identical Chrysippus will repeat himself down to the smallest detail in a life that occurs at a different time from his present life. Barnes had seemed to argue compellingly that, according to linear time, there could be no future distinct from the present for Chrysippus' next life to occupy. If Chrysippus' next life was to be a genuinely second occurrence, a genuine repetition of his present life, a real 'living again', it would have to take place at instants quite distinct from those of his present life. However, Barnes argued,

[81] Stobaeus 1.105, 18–106. 23 (= LS 51A, D, E).
[82] See Sorabji 1986, 227.   [83] So Salles 2005*b*, 103–8.
[84] As ibid. 99, the proponent of merely type-identical events, accepts.

the Stoics have no way of distinguishing times independently of events. Hence if the events are identical, the times of their occurrence must be identical too.

Any satisfactory defence of the genuine recurrence of numerically identical individuals, including all their actions—that is, the recurrence of the world's constitutive events according to the S1 model—has to meet the following two conditions. First, it must show how the recurrence could occur in a world situated at a genuinely distinct time, and second, it must show how the recurrence would not infringe the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. Here is a proposal which gives Chrysippus and his actions a future return to his numerically identical present life but permits that future to be at a globally linear time distinct from the present.

Imagine that all the objects and events of our world are represented on and exist as the contents of a video cassette. This video starts with the beginning of the world and it ends at the conflagration. Everything is shown on the cassette just as it actually happens, but because the cassette shows, or rather is, the entire history of the generated world, its contents are complete, once and for all. Now, imagine the Stoic god during his providential life at the conflagration when no such world yet exists. This phase of the divine life is not represented on the cassette because, as we have seen, god's life precedes the generation of every world and continues after every world has ended. God, in his providence, decides to re-create the world in just the same causal sequence (which is also the sequence of god's 'seminal thoughts') as before, so he rewinds the casette, as it were, and decides to run it right through again. He himself is, of course, a character in the movie; or rather, the movie *is* the world-constituting phase of god's life. But that detail is not relevant to the main purpose of the model. The relevant point is that, because god's existence, unlike the world's, continues uninterruptedly, he can occupy a temporal position globally external to the events constitutive of the generated world and their own times, relative to one another. That is to say, god can run the same movie as often as he likes.

Now consider the implications of the model for solving our problem. The cassette represents a sequence of events that, relative to their participants, happen once only, and happen in the single time interval that it takes to run the cassette right through—a great year, as the Stoics would say. On the cassette John Wayne rides into the sunset on a certain day, and he does this once only. The time pertaining to the movie's contents is completely closed. But god can view and participate in that event as often as he chooses. All he has to do is rewind the cassette and run it though again. So from the perspective of

god or the cosmos, John Wayne repeats himself again and again, in success-
ive playings of the cassette, while remaining the exactly identical John Wayne.
Thus, for god, there can be a genuine sequence of numerically identical John
Waynes and John Wayne actions. Each playing of the cassette will occupy a
different slice of global time, and so there will be a type-identical recurrence of
each world, taken as a whole. Yet all the contents and events of each world will
be numerically the same.

The Stoics knew nothing of videos. But they gave an account of time which
fits the model very well—'time is like the unwinding of a rope, bringing
about nothing new and replicating whatever was primary', and they also said
that god, from his knowledge of the present cycle, knows what is going to
happen in the next cycle.[85] We may imagine each object and event as occupy-
ing a fixed position on time's rope, just like the frames of a movie film. When
the rope is unwound or rewound, its coils will not contain a succession of
Socrateses and a succession of his lives. They will contain one and only one
Socrates, but whoever winds or unwinds the rope fully and repeatedly will
come to the self-same Socrates, time and again.

The suggestion is, then, that the recurrence of numerically identical indi-
viduals in Stoicism is a coherent concept relative not to their own but to god's
actions and perspectives. It remains true that all runnings of the global cassette
will be type-identical. Still, that need not present god with a problem about
time or discernibility. Presumably, he likes the show so much that he does not
care to enumerate or distinguish its occurrences, but if he were to do so, he
could avail himself of the necessary temporal concepts. All he has to do, when
he is watching John Wayne ride into the sunset, is to say to himself: I'd like
to take another look at what John Wayne said to the sheriff in the last world-
cycle. I liked that every time I saw it before this showing, and I liked it this
time too, so I think I will run the movie through again after it finishes.

Let me finally suggest what the theory of everlasting recurrence might amount
to from the perspective of Stoic ethics. Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* abound
in fascinating reflections on time. Here are two samples:

Even if you were to live three thousand years or thirty thousand, nevertheless remem-
ber that no one loses another life than this which he is living nor lives any other life
than this which he is losing. For the present is equal for all, and so what is passing
away is equal; and this shows that what is being lost is merely a moment. No one

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[85] Cicero, *Div.* 1.127 = LS 55O and Nemesius (cited above, p. 256).

could lose what is past or what is future. For how could anyone deprive him of what he does not have? Always remember, then, these two things: one, that everything everlastingly is of the same kind and cyclically recurrent, and it makes no difference whether one should see the same things for a hundred years or for two hundred or for an infinite time. Two, that the longest lived and the quickest to die have an equal loss. For it is the present alone of which one is deprived, since this is the only thing that he has, and no one loses what he does not have.[86]

And now this:

The properties of the rational soul: it sees itself, articulates itself, makes itself into whatever it wants . . . it achieves its particular goal whenever the end of life arrives . . . it makes a circuit of the whole world, both the void which surrounds it and its shape; it extends itself out into the infinity of time and encompasses the periodic rebirth of the whole, and understands and observes that those after us will see nothing new nor did those before us see anything greater, but in a way the man of forty years, if he has any understanding at all, has seen all the past and all the future because they are of the same kind.[87]

Marcus leaves it open whether the world alternates between conflagrations and recurrences or renews itself by everlasting mutations of the elements.[88] He probably reckoned both theses to be equally plausible and of similar significance. What preoccupies him continually is the relationship between mutability, changelessness, and the notion that in the present we have all that we can have. His insistence on the irrelevance of a long life, and his claim that forty years are long enough to grasp the entire history of the world, might seem to exclude any moral point to everlasting recurrence. I think, on the contrary, that his reflections may indicate its deepest significance for the Stoic way of life.

  Everlasting recurrence, in its orthodox formulation (S1), offers us not a vestige of difference from the lives we lead now. If it is true, then we are destined always to be just what we are in this present. No point then in any such thought like 'if only things were different', or 'if only I might have my time over again', or 'maybe there's a future life when I will be more fortunate'. Nehamas (1980, 356) has suggested that, for Nietzsche, the eternal recurrence is best regarded as 'a provocative and serious theory of human personality'. Interpreting the doctrine in Nietzsche conditionally, Nehamas (p. 345) sees it there as 'the hypothesis that if we were to have another life it would have to

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[86] *Med.* 2.14.   [87] *Med.* 11.1–2.
[88] Cf. Mansfeld 1983, 220 with n. 9, 231 for further references to the *Meditations*.

be, if it were to be *our* life at all, the very same life that we have already had'. Nietzsche's conception of the will to power is a far cry, in some respects, from the Stoic providential succession of worlds. Yet there are more than surface similarities between the philosophies. The language of *Zarathustra* has some striking affinities with Marcus Aurelius: 'to redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all "it was" into "thus I willed it"—that alone I should call redemption . . . willing liberates . . . the will cannot will backwards'; and 'the time is gone when mere accidents could still happen to me; and what could still happen to me now that was not mine already? What returns, what finally comes home to me, is my own self.'[89]

In the view of Nehamas, everlasting recurrence is not a cosmological doctrine in Nietzsche. That may be. Yet I should be surprised if someone so deeply soaked in classical literature were not given food for his own digestion from these Stoic antecedents. It could be, moreover, that Nietzsche himself detected the wider Stoic resonances of everlasting recurrence such as I have been canvassing. The strength of Stoicism, which is also its weakness, is getting logic, ethics, and physics into the closest possible fit. I have argued that the conflagration and everlasting recurrence exhibit that coherence no less than more philosophically reputable Stoic doctrines. Physics, logic, and theology determine that Chrysippus will live again. Yet that prospect gives him nothing that he does not have now. Or is that false? His life will be just the same again. But reflect: everlasting recurrence, if true, shows that you did endure, and live again to prove it. The problems of the immediate future require no less resolution and fortitude. But you will manage them, as you did before.

POSTSCRIPT

Most of this chapter is reprinted here with only incidental changes from the original publication, but I have rewritten the section on 'the time of everlasting recurrence' in order to reply to objections to my earlier attribution to the Stoics of a theory of circular time. In the notes I also refer to the following publications, from all of which I have benefited and which deserve much more detailed consideration than I have the space to provide here: Gourinat 2002, Salles 2005*a* and 2005*b*, Sorabji 1986, and White 1985.

[89] Quoted by Nehamas 1980, 348, 338, from Kaufmann 1968.

PART V

CICERO, AND ROMAN STOICISM

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Cicero's Plato and Aristotle

The aim of this chapter is to approach Cicero's philosophical work by study-
ing his assessments and use of Plato and Aristotle. That could, of course, be
a topic for a whole book.[1] As assessed by Cicero, Plato and Aristotle con-
stitute between them all that is best in philosophy, both in their own right
and by the traditions they established via their successors in the Academy and
the Lyceum. Merely translating their 'superhuman talents' (*divina ingenia*),
he says, would be a patriotic service (*Fin*. 1.7). Cicero even called the two
gymnasia of his Tusculan villa by these names.[2] So an adequate account of
Cicero's Plato and Aristotle, it might seem, would have to incorporate the
main part of Cicero's philosophical writings. In fact, those works are primar-
ily concerned with post-Aristotelian or Hellenistic philosophy. Aristotle, and
especially Plato, were more to Cicero than great names from the past, but
their philosophies per se were not major talking-points during his lifetime.
By including Plato and Aristotle in his philosophical corpus, Cicero was less
concerned with their individual doctrines than with the general impetus they
had given to the subject, their diffused influence as expressed by the terms
Academics and Peripatetics, and their literary distinction. In this last respect

[1] I have not attempted to digest all the literature on this subject. Works which I have found
particularly helpful include Boyancé 1970*a*, Burkert 1965, De Graff 1940, Gersh 1986, and Gigon
1959.

[2] Cf. *Tusc*. 2.9, 3.7 for Cicero's 'Academy', and *Div*. 1.8, 2.8 for his 'Lyceum'.

he contrasts them with the 'dialectically incompetent' or 'inelegant' Epicureans and the 'pedantically technical' Stoics, whose two philosophies he does present and criticize in some depth.[3]

Yet there is more, or so I will argue, to Cicero's Plato and Aristotle than can be ascertained from his purely philosophical background and sympathies. Cicero was not a purist in philosophy. His philosophical interests and judgements were constantly influenced by his Roman identity as an orator, statesman, and consistent supporter of the *mos maiorum*. He admired Plato and Aristotle chiefly, I think, because in his eyes their dialectical and political interests helped to bridge the gap between philosophy, where he was not completely at home, and rhetoric, where he was on very firm ground. If the *De republica* were not so fragmentary, it would be a good text to explore from this point of view.[4] Instead, I have decided to focus upon two other points. First, Cicero's use of Plato specifically, by which I mean his interest in identifiable material from Plato's dialogues; and second, his appeal to Aristotle and the Academic tradition for the methodology of pro and contra argument (*in utramque partem dicere*). That is the main agenda. What it involves needs some prefatory remarks concerning general aspects of Cicero's philosophizing.

CICERO'S PHILOSOPHIZING

We today see Cicero as an orator first and a philosopher distantly second. Cicero himself shifts about in his self-descriptions and self-assessments.[5] What he remains consistent about is his interest as a writer in integrating philosophy with politics and rhetoric.[6] That is the key to understanding his philosophical work as a whole, his philosophical sympathies, and much of his mind-set. This point is well taken by MacKendrick (1989) in his survey of all Cicero's philosophical books, but it needs to be emphasized as a

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[3] For Epicurean neglect of logic, see *Acad.* 1.5; *Fin.* 1.22, and for stylistic inelegance, 1.14 (modified at 1.15); *Tusc.* 2.8. For complaints against the Stoics' dialectical pedantry, see *Fin.* 3.3 (*spinosum*), 4.7 (*aliquanto minutius*).

[4] In *Div.* 2.3 Cicero describes political theory as a *magnus locus philosophiaeque propius, a Platone, Aristotele, Theophrasto totaque Peripateticorum familia tractatus uberrime*. For Cicero's interest in combining Platonic and Peripatetic approaches, cf. Büchner 1984, 188; D. Frede 1989.

[5] For a good discussion and a useful collection of passages, including material from speeches and letters as well as from the philosophica, cf. Fuchs 1959. According to Plutarch, *Cicero* 877C, Cicero wanted his friends to call him not rhetor but philosopher, since he had chosen philosophy ὡς ἔργον ... ῥητορικῇ δὲ ὀργάνῳ χρῆσθαι πολιτευόμενος ἐπὶ τὰς χρείας.

[6] See *Inv.* 1.1, 1.4; *De or.* 1.53–4, 3.72; *Or.* 11–19; *Off.* 1.2–3; *Fat.* 3; *Parad. St.*1–3.

corrective to the tendency, especially among English-speaking interpreters of the philosophical works of Cicero's later years, to study them in isolation from books that he wrote earlier, not only *De republica* and *De legibus* but also *De inventione* and *De oratore*. The latest of these works also tend to be detached from the *Brutus* and *Orator*, which Cicero wrote in 46 BC shortly before he set to work on his most extended set of philosophical books. Yet he himself groups all of these works together when he is surveying his philosophical compositions in the preface to *De divinatione* book 2. There he remarks that Plato and the whole Peripatetic school wrote *de republica* (he does not allude here to his own *De legibus*), while Aristotle and Theophrastus, 'men pre-eminent both intellectually and rhetorically' (*excellentes viri cum subtilitate tum copia*), combined 'rules for speaking' (*dicendi praecepta*) with philosophy (*Div.* 2.4).

The tendency among scholars of ancient philosophy to focus on only the philosophical works of Cicero's last years, excluding all his essays on rhetoric, gives many misleading impressions. It fails to indicate the professed strength of Cicero's interest in Plato and Aristotle per se, the depth of his familiarity with techniques of argument, and the background to his frequent *obiter dicta* in the late writings on the requisite links between philosophy and rhetoric. Finally, the restricted approach to Cicero's philosophical compositions has tended to place undue emphasis on his supposedly undying allegiance to Philo of Larissa or, as some also believe, his shifts of allegiance from Philo in his youth, to the Old Academy of Antiochus in maturity, back to Philo again in his last years.[7]

Mention of these mentors brings me to a further preliminary point. In approaching Cicero's Plato and Aristotle, we need to remember that he lived through an odd period in the history of philosophy. Cicero consistently calls himself an Academic, but the Academy at the time of his writing was defunct, as were also its last two leading authorities just mentioned, Philo and Antiochus. Cicero had attended lectures by both of them in his youth, and what he learned, it seems, was two radically different views of the Academy's history and philosophical posture.[8] Since the time of Arcesilaus in the early third century BC the Academy had interpreted Plato as a sceptic, and this was the position originally maintained by both Philo and Antiochus. But at the

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[7] The second alternative, which has been canvassed by Glucker 1988 and Steinmetz 1989, is convincingly rejected by Görler 1995.

[8] For evidence and discussion of the positions of Philo and Antiochus, cf. Glucker 1978; Barnes 1989; Görler 1995; Brittain 2001.

time Cicero heard Antiochus, that philosopher had abandoned scepticism in favour of the Stoic theory of knowledge. He reconciled this position with his Academic identity by claiming that much of Stoicism was an adaptation of a Platonic body of doctrine, and that this Stoicized Platonism was essentially congruent with Aristotle and the later Peripatos. The reformed Antiochus championed the 'Old' Academy, and thereby identified its sceptical posture as a deviation which he branded by the name 'New' Academy. Philo never endorsed Antiochus' flirtation with Stoicism. When the young Cicero heard him lecture at Rome, Philo was probably still an Academic sceptic. However, before his death Philo too renounced scepticism, apparently maintaining that from Plato down to his own time the Academy believed knowledge to be possible. The Academy's scepticism, on this view, had been directed solely against the Stoics' criterion of truth, which Philo continued to contest. So in his final phase Philo too defended the unity of the Academy.

Cicero probably got his first introduction to Plato from Philo, then still in his sceptical phase. This fits Cicero's own statement in *Academica* 1.46 that the so-called New Academy 'seems old to me if we include Plato as a member of it, in whose books nothing is affirmed and there is much dis-cussion on either side (*in utramque partem*), everything is investigated and nothing is stated as certain'. Throughout the philosophical writings of his last years Cicero consistently describes himself as an Academic who searches after truth and does so by arguing or allowing others to argue the pro and con-tra on any thesis.[9] He presents himself as an unreformed Philonian and as someone who can refer to 'our' Carneades. But Cicero also characterizes his philosophy as 'not very different from that of the Peripatetics, since we both claim to be Socratics and Platonists' (*Off*. 1.2). In the preface to *De officiis* book 2, section 8 he calls the Peripatos 'a most ancient and noble philosophy' (*antiquissima nobilissimaque philosophia*) and one closely aligned with his own school. Did Philo seek to appropriate the Peripatetics? Almost certainly not. That was the trademark of Antiochus. Can Cicero, then, be both a Philonian and an Antiochean Academic at the same time?

Many have thought not, but in fact this hybrid makes excellent sense, biographically and philosophically. Biographically, because Cicero plainly admired Antiochus and was strongly influenced by him. Philosophically too it is coherent if one exempts from Cicero's Antiochean leanings Antiochus'

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[9] Cf. *Acad*. 1.17, 2.7–9; *ND* 1.6; *Tusc*. 5.11; *Fin*. 2.2–3 (by implication); *Div*. 1.7, 2.8–9; *Fat*. 3–4; *Off*. 2.7–8.

endorsement of Stoic epistemology, with its claim that someone can be in a position to be certain that what he perceives is really the case. As an unreformed Philonian or Carneadean Academic, Cicero cannot consistently claim to have discovered any truths that are certain; nor does he ever do so. However, *in utramque partem dicere* or words to that effect, as he repeatedly says (e.g. *Acad.* 2.7–8; *Off.* 2.8; *Div.* 2.150), does not debar him from finding verisimilitude. Hence he can consistently use this method as a refutative and heuristic device, and at the same time, as he does, prefer Stoic theology to the Carneadean refutations of it mounted by Cotta in *De natura deorum* book 3 (cf. *ND* 3.95). Likewise, he can consistently expound with approval Stoic doctrine on *officia* in the work of that name, or criticize Stoic ethics from the Antiochean standpoint (*Fin.* 4.3). His official allegiance to the sceptical Academy carries with it no doctrinal commitments outside epistemology, nor, on the other hand, need it inhibit him from approving the plausibility of philosophical theses—for instance the immortality of the soul in *Tusculan disputations* book 1—if he finds the arguments in their favour more convincing than those against them. His official stance also allows him, when he chooses, to keep the destructive arguments of Academic scepticism at a distance, as he explicitly does in *De legibus* 1.39.[10]

It is sometimes said that Cicero, or his spokesman, criticizes a philosophical school from the perspective of the New Academy; but all that can mean, or should mean, is finding counter-arguments, since the only doctrinal perspective the New Academy adopted was one of rejecting the acquisition of infallible knowledge or certainty. In all other respects, as Cicero claims on his school's behalf (*Acad.* 2.8), it leaves his 'power of judgement' (*iudicandi potestas*) intact. Thus we should distinguish in Cicero between the *genus philosophandi* that he favours—that is, the sceptical Academic methodology—and theses that he finds 'plausible' (*probabilia*), which could be drawn in theory from any other school.

Cicero's Academic scepticism, then, is quite compatible with his approving, or taking to be *probabile*, Antiochus' appropriation of Peripatetic doctrine or methodology. It also permits Cicero to favour, as he plainly does, many concepts or theories that are advanced in Plato's dialogues. In the light of his own education and the contemporary state of philosophy, his hybrid approach to the Academy is intelligible and intelligent. It enables him to combine his apparently sincere reservations about achieving certainty with a

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[10] See Görler 1995.

constructive approach to the philosophical tradition that he knows. It also enables him to recognize that there are both aporetic and substantive elements in Plato's dialogues. Since Cicero was not a professional philosopher, some uncertainty must attach to the implications of his claim to be a *member* of the New Academy. Even taking it at face value, we should not suppose that Varro's remarks to Cicero about his leaving the Old Academy for the New (*Acad.* 1.13) refer to any official change in his philosophical allegiance.

Cicero's professed endorsement of Peripatetic methodology brings up a further peculiarity about his philosophical milieu, and my last preliminary point. Our Aristotle—the Aristotle of the treatises we possess—was just coming back into circulation at the end of Cicero's life. But although Cicero himself speaks of going to get some Aristotelian *commentarii* from the library of Lucullus Junior (*Fin.* 3.10), the Aristotle that Cicero himself knew at first hand was probably confined in the main to doxographical notices, the dialogues lost to us, and the incorporation of Aristotelian rhetoric in Hellenistic handbooks.[11] So we face the peculiarity that Cicero probably had only scanty, or at least selective, access to our Aristotle and that we can read only little of his. The same disequilibrium in accessibility to Aristotle will probably have applied to Antiochus and any other of Cicero's sources. Cicero makes a number of intriguing references to Aristotle's doctrines in cosmology and psychology, and he draws on some details of Aristotle's rhetorical theory.[12] But what will chiefly concern me about Aristotle in this study is something more general and basic—his recourse to Aristotle as a model of dialectical methodology to be cited alongside the Academic sceptics.

CICERO'S PLATO

As an official Academic, Cicero could not fail to venerate Plato. Even so, his laudation of the great man is persistent and extreme. Plato is 'virtually a philosophers' god' (*quasi quidam deus philosophorum*, *ND* 2.32), 'that god of ours'

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[11] Cf. Gigon 1959; Fortenbaugh 1989; Huby 1989. However, it is important to keep an open mind about this question. What a modern scholar would find unsatisfactory as a direct report or use of our Aristotle is not sufficient to prove Cicero's total ignorance of that material. Each case (e.g. book 5 of *Fin.*) needs to be examined on an individual basis.

[12] See Furley 1989*b* on passages from *ND*. Note also Aristotle's four-element theory (*Tusc.* 1.40) and his fifth element (*Tusc.* 1.22, 41, 65); his calling the mind ἐνδελέχεια (*Tusc.* 1.22); allusion to *Hist. an.* 552b17–23 (presumably an example Aristotle had also used in his exoteric writings) at *Tusc.* 1.94. That Cicero knew Aristotle's *Rhetoric* only at second hand is hardly as demonstrable as Fortenbaugh 1989 maintains.

(*deus ille noster*; *Att.* 4.16.3), 'our Plato' (*Rep.* 4.5; *Leg.* 3.5), and 'the first of philosophers in rank' (*princeps philosophorum*, *Fin.* 5.7), a title, he says, Aristotle would otherwise earn. Cicero's 'emulation' of Plato, as Quintilian called it (10.1.123), is evident in his imitation of the Platonic dialogue style, his borrowing some of Plato's scene-setting (from *Phaedrus* in *De oratore* 1.28; from the Cephalus of Plato's *Republic* in *De senectute* 7; from *Phaedrus* 230b in *De legibus* 2.6, etc.), and his presenting himself as the author of works entitled *Republic* and *Laws*. The last point especially indicates an aspiration to be regarded as the Roman Plato, or at least the Roman disseminator of Plato. Writing to Atticus (*Att.* 9.13.4), Cicero refers to Plato's *Seventh letter*, in order to compare his own situation in regard to Julius Caesar with that of Plato confronting Dionysius of Syracuse. It is not known, I think, whether anyone before Cicero had translated Plato into Latin. Apart from the surviving but incomplete translation of the *Timaeus*, Cicero translated the *Protagoras*.[13] In addition to excerpts from Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, Cicero's philosophical works include translations from other dialogues of Plato, especially *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*. The only major dialogues he may not have known appear to be *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*. His favourites, one may guess, were *Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, and *Gorgias*.[14]

Cicero's Plato, of course, includes Socrates, the 'father of philosophy' (*parens philosophiae*, *Fin.* 2.1; cf. *ND* 1.93) as he calls him, but Cicero does not normally conflate Socrates and Plato. For him Socrates is primarily the initiator of the Academics' dialectical methodology (cf. *Fin.* 2.1–2; *Tusc.* 1.8; *ND* 1.11) and not the author of the philosophical theses that Plato attributes to him in his constructive dialogues (cf. *Rep.* 1.15–16).

At face value, then, Plato in his own right is of great interest and value to Cicero, quite apart from the Academic and Peripatetic traditions which, as Cicero learned them from his teachers, Plato himself was supposed to have

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[13] On the four attested fragments that survive, see Büchner 1963, 1150.

[14] The principal Platonic texts which Cicero translates or alludes to are: *De or.* 3.21 (*Epinom.* 992a); *Rep.* 1.66 (*Rep.* 8, 562c–563e), *Rep.* 6.25–6 (*Phaedr.* 245c–e); *Leg.* 2.45 (*Laws* 12, 955e–956b); *Acad.* 1.16 (*Ap.* 21a); *Fin.* 2.52, *Off.* 1.15 (*Phdr.* 250d), *Fin.* 2.92 (*Ep.* 7.326b), 2.102 (*Tim.* 39), 5.58 (*Laws* 653a); *Off.* 1.28 (*Rep.* 6, 485, 7, 520d), 1.63 (*Menex.* 246e and *Lach.* 197b), 1.85 (*Rep.* 1, 342e, 4, 420b), 1.87 (*Rep.* 8, 567c, *Laws* 9, 856b); *Sen.* 44 (*Tim.* 69d), 78 (*Phd.* 72e–73b, 78–80; *Phdr.* 245c); *Div.* 1.1 (*Phdr.* 244c), 1.60 (*Rep.* 9, 571), 1.80 (*Phdr.* 245a); *ND* 2.32 (*Tim.* 89); *Tusc.* 1.20 (*Tim.* 69c), 1.46–7 (*Tht.* 184c, on the purely instrumental role of the senses), 1.53 and *Rep.* 6.25–6 (*Phaedr.* 245c–246a), 1.57 (*Meno* 81e), 1.71–5 (*Phaed.* 80a–d, 108a–c, 84e–85d, 61c–62c, 67d), 1.97–9 (*Ap.* 40c–41d), 5.35 (*Gorg.* 470d–471a), 5.36 (*Menex.* 247e–248a); *De or.* 1.28 (*Phdr.* 229a, 230b). For a collection of all Cicero's references to Plato, see De Graff 1940.

authorized. No other individual philosopher is cited by him as fully and as frequently. Let us ask, then, what we would know of Plato's philosophy if Cicero were our only evidence for it.

We would learn that Plato's *Republic* was utopian (*Rep.* 2.21–2; cf. *De or.* 1.224, 230), involving no private ownership for citizens (*Rep.* 4.5), and that it ended with the myth of Er (*Rep.* 6.3)—the model of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*—but we would hear virtually nothing about the psychological, ethical, educational (but cf. *Leg.* 2.38, 3.32), and metaphysical foundations of Plato's ideal state. We would learn a few of Plato's laws in his work of that name, but under the incorrect presumption that Plato designed them as laws for his ideal republic (*Leg.* 1.15). We would learn something of Plato's arguments for the soul's recollection and immortality, including the argument of the *Phaedrus* from self-motion, and that Plato provided mythical accounts of the soul's afterlife (cf. the passages from *Tusc.* 1 cited in n. 14 above). We would get a bare idea of the tripartite psychology (*Acad.* 2.124; *Tusc.* 1.20), elsewhere called bipartite (*Tusc.* 4.10), and associated with Pythagoras as well as with Plato. We would know that Plato's cosmology envisaged a divine craftsman (*ND* 1.19), that Plato made virtue essential to happiness (*Tusc.* 5.34), subordinated self-interest to political welfare (*Off.* 1.85), and banished the poets from his ideal state (*Rep.* 4.5; *Tusc.* 2.27). Finally, in three of his works (on which more below) Cicero refers explicitly to Plato's theory of Forms.

Is this a meagre haul? Walter Burkert (1965, 198) has written: 'Cicero's citations and reminiscences of Plato never include mention of what we are inclined to regard as the centre of Platonic philosophy: the allegory of the Cave.'[15] He also notes Cicero's lack of interest in the central issues of Plato's ethics—the unity of the virtues, the conception of love, the Form of the Good—and Cicero's apparent ignorance of the dialectical dialogues, *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*.

Before responding to these points, I want to point out that much of what Cicero does tell us about Plato specifically, though sometimes baldly expressed, is authentically and distinctively Platonic. The proofs of immortality, the tripartite soul, the soul as principle of motion, recollection—these are features of Plato's philosophy none of which can have been straightforwardly absorbed

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[15] 'Unter allen Platonzitaten und Platonanklängen bei Cicero ist nie von dem die Rede, was wir fürs Zentrum der platonischen Philosophie zu halten geneigt sind: vom Höhengleichnis.' In fact Cicero (*ND* 2.95) translates from Aristotle's lost dialogue *On philosophy* a purple passage clearly modelled on Plato's Cave and journey up to the sun-illuminated earth.

into the unitarian Academic/Peripatetic tradition that Cicero, no doubt guided by Antiochus, frequently invokes. Either Cicero has gleaned these out of Plato by himself, or he was directed to them by a teacher largely uncontaminated by philosophical preconceptions or interpretative traditions. The prior alternative seems much the more probable, especially since Cicero often indicates his Platonic source without cluttering it with reference to an exegetical background, though he knows that Aristotle rejected the theory of Forms (*Acad.* 1.33).

It is clear that Cicero did read Plato for himself, that he was capable of excerpting passages which suited the purposes of his own writings, and that he could distinguish many of Plato's key doctrines. Sometimes what he says about Plato is coloured by a doxographical background; at other times apparently not so. In the case of the theory of Forms, which evidently appealed to him (for implicit references to it, see *Off.* 1.15, 3.69), Cicero seems in *Tusculans* 1.57–8 to go directly to the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*. But in *Academica* 1.30–3 he calls Varro's account of the Forms an Academic tradition inherited from Plato (*haec erat illis prima forma a Platone tradita*). Cicero's omission of much else that we regard as distinctively Platonic may be explained by his dependence on Antiochus. The latter's philosophy, it is reasonable to conclude, did not incorporate any distinctively Platonic ethics, treating Plato rather vaguely as the grand authority for his synthetic amalgam of Academy, Peripatos, and Stoa. Plato's dialectic, insofar as this comprised collection and division, was probably regarded as being subsumed into a generic methodology—a way of discussing things 'systematically' (*ratione et via*)—which Cicero regularly attributes to the Academy and Peripatos.[16] That will help to account for Cicero's ignorance of, or indifference to, Plato's logical dialogues. As for Plato's cosmology, which is briefly criticized by the Epicurean Velleius in *De natura deorum* (cf. 1.18–20), Cicero may have regarded the *Timaeus* as a work on Pythagoreanism, intending his translation of it to be part of a never-completed exposition of that philosophy.[17]

More surprising, perhaps, especially in the context of the Lucullus book of the *Academica*, is the absence of any sceptical appeal or allusion to the *Theaetetus*. One would suppose that this dialogue's attack on a perceptual basis for knowledge should have been grist to the arguments of Arcesilaus and Carneades against the Stoic criterion of truth. If Cicero alludes anywhere in the *Academica* to the *Theaetetus*, he does so in the context of the opposing

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[16] Cf. Moraux 1984, 453.   [17] Cf. Giomini 1975, pp. xvi–xvii.

camp, where Varro attributes Heracleitean flux to all phenomenal objects.[18] This kind of selective allusion to the dialogues strongly confirms my earlier point about the limits of Cicero's independent usage of Plato. In cases where Plato could be read doctrinally *or* sceptically—passages which mattered to the definition of the Old or New Academy—Cicero was presumably influenced by the views of his Academic mentors. The Plato expounded by Antiochean Varro, but presumably not that of Philo, had a theory of Forms.

What that theory was, and how far Antiochus himself endorsed it, are two questions I should like to dodge.[19] The point that interests me here is Cicero's own use of the theory of Forms in the *Orator* (7–10). In that famous passage Cicero appeals to Plato's Forms as support and explanation for his characterization of the ideal orator. What he is seeking, he says, is 'that which is absolutely outstanding' (*illud quo nihil possit esse praestantius*)—a way of speaking which is evident at best only intermittently in the course of delivering a speech. Particular orations stand to this ideal oratory as imperfect copies of a perfect original, which itself can be grasped only by the mind. Thus the sculptor Phidias modelled his representations of Jupiter and Minerva not on any human likeness, but on an 'ultimate form of beauty' (*species pulchritudinis eximia quaedam*), located in his mind.

Perfectae eloquentiae speciem animo videmus, effigiem auribus quaerimus. has rerum formas appellat ideas ille non intellegendi solum, sed etiam dicendi gravissimus auctor et magister Plato. easque gigni negat, et ait semper esse, ac ratione et intellegentia contineri; cetera nasci, occidere, fluere, labi, nec diutius esse uno et eodem statu. quidquid est igitur, de quo ratione et via disputetur, id est ad ultimam sui generis formam speciemque redigendum.

It is with the mind that we see the form of perfect eloquence, but with our ears that we seek its likeness. Plato, the weightiest authority and teacher of speech as well as understanding, calls these forms of things *ideai*. He says that they do not come into being but exist for ever, and are grasped by reason and understanding; that other things come into being, perish, flow, decay, and do not remain for long in one and the same condition. Whatever, then, is to be discussed *systematically* must be reduced to the ultimate form and species of its genus.

Halfway through the *Orator* Cicero recalls his dependence on Plato (101):

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[18] No citation from Plato is given at *Acad.* 1.31, but two of Cicero's expressions in this context are virtual translations of sentences in *Tht.* 182, *nihil umquam esset constans*, and *continenter laberentur et fluerent omnia*. Cicero's Latin is closer to Plato's actual words here than to other Platonic contexts he could have had before him, such as *Crat.* 439d and *Tim.* 49e.

[19] Cf. Barnes 1989, 95–6; Reid 1985 on *Acad.* 1.30 ff.

Non enim eloquentem quaero, neque quidquam mortale et caducum, sed illud ipsum cuius qui sit compos sit eloquens; quod nihil est aliud nisi eloquentia ipsa, quam nullis nisi mentis oculis videre possumus.

What I am seeking is not an eloquent individual nor anything mortal and transitory but that very thing, possession of which makes someone eloquent; and that is nothing but eloquence itself, which we can see with no eyes but those of the mind.

Cicero's appeal to Plato in these passages has generated scholarly interest and complaint from at least three different viewpoints: philosophical source-criticism, the history of Middle Platonism, and ancient theories of art.[20] What concerns me in the passage is none of these things but rather Cicero's efforts to produce an account of ideal oratory by invoking Plato's most famous and obscure doctrine. Cicero knew very well that oratory was no member of the Platonic family of Forms. Setting that point on one side for the moment, let us consider how Cicero characterizes the Forms in the *Orator*. His recourse to Plato here is a good test of his capacity for accurate reportage and perhaps for independent interpretation.

Cicero identifies six characteristics of the Forms for which he has excellent Platonic authority—everlastingness, non-susceptibility to change in contrast with perceptible things, paradigmatism, accessibility to the mind but not the senses, responsibility for instantiation or participation by particulars (so I take *compos* at *Or.* 101), and standing as the objects of definition. His account of these characteristics often echoes Plato very closely: compare *illud ipsum* for αὐτὸ τό, *compos* for μετέχων, *easque gigni negat et ait semper esse* for *Symp.* 210e, ἀεὶ ὂν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον, etc. (Similar points can be made for Cicero's rendering of Plato in the passages on Forms from *Acad.* 1.30–3 and *Tusc.* 1.57–8.) What is it, then, that scholars find disturbingly heterodox about Cicero's reports of Plato?

First, they think that Cicero is following a tradition which has reduced the independently existing Platonic Forms to thoughts, discarding Plato's metaphysical baggage and ignoring his critique of that move in *Parmenides* 132b–c. The textual support for this scholarly claim is taken from Cicero's Phidias illustration, which actually occurs in the text *before* he refers to Plato. What Cicero explicitly appeals to Plato for is not his point about the artist as such, but the proposition that there are mentally visible *species* of which the senses can find only likenesses. In describing Phidias, Cicero says the artist did not fashion his statues of divinities by modelling them on some individual,

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[20] Cf. Burkert 1965, n. 45, pp. 190–1; Gersh 1986, 144 ff.; Panofksy 1924, 5–10.

but 'there resided in his mind an ultimate form of beauty; gazing on this and focused upon it, he applied his art and his hand to its likeness' (*sed ipsius in mente insidebat species pulchritudinis eximia quaedam, quam intuens in eaque defixus ad illius similitudinem artem et manum dirigebat* (*Or.* 9). 'Looking at' a Form is standard Platonic language, and Plato also standardly says that the Forms are 'capable of being seen by the intellect'. So what is un-Platonic here is at most the mention of the Form's location in the artist's mind. However, the expression *in mente insidebat* is not sufficient by itself to show that Cicero took Plato's Forms to be mind-dependent entities; it may simply be Cicero's way of making the obvious point that a Form must be present or accessible to any mind that perceives it, without implying in addition that its existence depends upon its being thought. That we should take the expression in this weaker sense becomes rather obvious when we connect Cicero's Phidias illustration to what he says later about Plato. What Phidias will have looked to is an everlasting and changeless Form, and that is something not reducible to or identical with his own occurrent act of thinking.

Plato's reification of the Forms, if not downright mistaken, is undoubtedly a doctrine of deep obscurity. Cicero alludes to the Forms' independent existence, but he does so in order to say something worth saying about conceptualizing ideals—that is, that people can entertain thoughts that transcend their own sensory experience and time-bound existence. So far as I can see, Cicero could have arrived at this view simply by reflecting on the Platonic passages that underlie his own text, as Plotinus, who says something very similar about Phidias, would later do (cf. *Enn.* 5.8.1). If we prefer to think that Cicero was incapable of doing this for himself, we can postulate an anonymous source for him, presumably Antiochus. But we should resist the common supposition (cf. Burkert and Gersh, cited in n. 20 above) that Cicero or his source approached the Platonic theory of Forms via Aristotelian and/or Stoic doctrine about the conceptualization of universals. What Cicero says is much too close to Plato's text for us to need to intrude those heresies as mediating factors, nor are they compatible with the everlasting and changeless existence that he ascribes to Plato's Forms.

Given Plato's own obscurity on the relation between Forms and acts of thought, I find nothing clearly un-Platonic in Cicero's text. The other point there that excites scholars is, of course, Cicero's treatment of the artist. Thus Panofsky (1924, 6), recalling *Republic* 10 where the artist is at two removes from reality, finds Cicero's claim about Phidias' access to the Form of Beauty not only un-Platonic but anti-Platonic. However, Panofsky seems to have

been unaware that in the *Phaedrus* Plato grants Beauty alone among Forms the 'dispensation to be most clearly apprehended through the mediation of vision' (cf. 250d). That brings it closer to the artist than Cicero himself proposes. The objection to accounts such as Panofsky gives is that Plato did not have a party-line on art and the Forms, on the basis of which we can confidently say he would at all stages of his philosophy have objected to what Cicero says in this passage. In fact I rather think he would have approved of it.

So much for the widespread belief that Cicero in this passage parades a distorted or eclectic or Middle Platonic version of the theory of Forms. I turn now to what is really interesting about this passage—Cicero's use of Plato in order to set up the clearly un-Platonic Form of Eloquence. I suggest that Cicero does this because he wants to represent his own ideal—the proper combination of philosophy and rhetoric—as true to the spirit, though not to the letter, of Plato's discourses. If this is correct, it gives us a significant insight into Cicero's constant eulogy of Plato and his own interests in philosophy. To put the point another way, Cicero offers his ideal combination of philosophy and rhetoric as a distinctly Roman contribution. It allows the resources of Plato's discourses to assist the orator without requiring him to reject what he can also learn from Isocrates and Demosthenes.

CICERO ON PLATO AND RHETORIC

From the juvenile *De inventione* down to his final theoretical essay *De officiis*, Cicero dwells on the importance of combining rhetoric and philosophy (see n. 6 above). He consistently recognizes the differences between the two types of discourse and the difficulty of succeeding in both of them, as perhaps, he says, among the Greeks only Demetrius of Phalerum has done (*Off.* 1.3). He also knows the history of Greek philosophy well enough, and that of Greek and Roman rhetoric, to be aware that his ideal combination is not only difficult to approximate but also something that many experts on either side would actually oppose. In the historical sketch he gives to Crassus (*De oratore* 3.59 ff.), Cicero blames Socrates for separating philosophy from rhetoric. He alludes to Plato's record of Socrates' discourses, which, says Crassus, were responsible for 'the virtual rift between the tongue and the intellect, which is something truly absurd, useless, and reprehensible' (*hinc discidium illud exstitit quasi linguae et cordis, absurdum sane et inutile et reprehendendum*, 3.61). Like the good lawyer that he is, Cicero does not contest the existence of this controversy. Instead, he turns it to his own advantage.

Within this very context of *De oratore* Socrates is described as someone who won every debate, not only because of his 'intelligence, acuity, charm, and subtlety' (*prudentia et acumen et venustas et subtilitas*) but also as a result of his 'eloquence, variety, and fullness' (*eloquentia*, *varietas*, and *copia*). The last two of these qualities are standard features of the 'grand style' in Cicero's rhetorical works (cf. *Or.* 20, 29, 97). In other words, Socrates himself, according to Cicero, actually combined philosophy and rhetoric. As for Plato, Cicero acknowledges his and other philosophers' criticisms of the orator. However, he says, the philosophers have also helped the orator, since they are the source of all his 'abundance and rhetorical matter, as it were' (*ubertas et quasi silva dicendi*, *Or.* 13; cf. *De or.* 1.47). This passage occurs shortly after Cicero's statement of his intention of delineating the ideal orator. Within the same context he claims that his own rhetorical identity and character come 'not from the rhetoricians' studios but from the groves of the Academy' (*non ex rhetorum officinis sed ex Academiae spatiis*, *Or.* 12). Where the philosophers fail the would-be orator is in not training him for the rough-and-tumble of forensic practice (cf. *Or.* 63–4). This is a stock Ciceronian point.

Still, he says in *De officiis* 1.4, if Plato had wanted to engage in public speaking he could have done so 'most weightily and fully' (*gravissime et copiosissime*). By the same token, Demosthenes, Plato's pupil, could have expounded Plato 'brilliantly' (*ornate splendideque*). Likewise, Aristotle could have made a fine orator and Isocrates a fine philosopher. Elsewhere Cicero describes Plato's eloquence as unsurpassable (*Tusc.* 1.24), and the way Jupiter would speak Greek if he could (*Brutus* 121). The fact that Cicero praises Plato's help to orators in the *Orator*, while also recognizing his insufficiency as a model for the orator in practice, is an indication, I think, that he wants his readers to compare his own *Orator* with the *Phaedrus*. That dialogue, with its assimilation of authentic rhetoric to Platonic dialectic, is of course the one that best suits Cicero's brief. He alludes to it several times (*Or.* 15, 39, 41, as he had previously done in *De oratore*) and he also perhaps recalls it in his extravagant expressions of love for Brutus (*Or.* 33–5). But the Form Plato expounded most fully in the *Phaedrus* was that of Beauty, not Eloquence. In Cicero's treatment of the latter, I suggest we are intended to see a critique of Plato's depreciation of rhetoric as well as a constructive use of his philosophy.

The individual Plato sets the scene for Cicero's account of ideal eloquence. For its methodology, however, it is Aristotle and the post-Platonic Academy

that he invokes. So at this point I leave Cicero's Plato, and turn to his philo-sophical-cum-rhetorical approval of these later philosophers.

CICERO'S ARISTOTLE AND *IN UTRAMQUE PARTEM DICERE*

Cicero's ideal orator is someone who can speak on any topic 'with variety and fullness' (*varie copioseque*), or who can do so 'with intelligence, organization, elaboration, and in a way that combines being memorable with some dig-nity of action' (*prudenter et composite et ornate et memoriter . . . cum quadam etiam actionis dignitate*, *De or.* 1.59, 64).[21] Even the second-best orator needs expertise in ethics (ibid. 68–9), and the benefit that can be derived from adorning his speeches with the material of natural philosophy. But it is the third branch of Hellenistic philosophy, logic, which Cicero emphasizes in the *Orator*, characterizing it in ways he could have learned from rhetorical handbooks and from Academic, Peripatetic, or Stoic professors: definition and division, genus and species, discriminating truth from falsehood, recog-nizing in an argument what follows or does not follow, and distinguishing ambiguities (*Or.* 16; cf. *Top.* 26, 31, 53).

Cicero's ideal orator is above all someone with dialectical expertise. Or, to express his view more briefly and characteristically, the ideal orator is someone who can speak well 'on either side' (*in utramque partem*). This rhetorical prac-tice, according to Cicero, was Aristotle's great innovation. Cicero mentions the point in several different contexts. In *De finibus* 5.10 he says: 'The Peri-patetics taught principles of rhetoric as well as dialectic; and Aristotle first instituted the practice of speaking on either side concerning individual mat-ters' (*de singulis rebus in utramque partem dicendi*). In *Orator* 46 Cicero says that Aristotle trained young men in arguing *theseis*—propositions of gener-al scope—'not in the philosophical manner of rigorous argument, but with a view to the orators' fullness, so that more elaborate and abundant speeches could be made on either side' (*non ad philosophorum morem tenuiter disserendi,*

[21] The best discussions are by Michel 1960, 1982, and Barwick 1963. Barwick 1963, 7 traces the origins of the concept of *perfectus orator* back at least as far as the rhetorician Hermagoras of Temnos (fl. 150 BC), but takes Cicero's particular blend of philosophy and rhetoric to be original (pp. 80–3). Michel 1982 emphasizes Cicero's concern to reconcile Plato and Gorgias by means of Aristotle and Isocrates.

sed ad copiam rhetorum, in utramque partem ut ornatius et uberius dici pos-
set). In the next sentence Cicero says Aristotle also taught 'topics'—argument
headings—'which are the source of every speech that deals with either side'
(*unde omnis in utramque partem traheretur oratio*).[22]

   From this remarkable passage it is clear that Cicero took Aristotle's alleged
concern with *in utramque partem dicere* and with 'topics' to be a methodology
for training orators as well as philosophers (cf. *De or.* 2.152). Cicero interprets
Aristotle similarly in *De oratore* 3.80, where Crassus characterizes the ideal
orator as follows:

Sin aliquis exstiterit aliquando qui Aristotelio more de omnibus rebus in utramque sen-
tentiam possit dicere et in omni causa duas contrarias orationes praeceptis illius cognitis
explicare, aut hoc Arcesilae modo et Carneadis contra omne quod propositum sit disserat,
quique ad eam rationem exercitationemque adiungat hunc rhetoricum usum moremque
dicendi, is sit verus, is perfectus, is solus orator.

If there should ever be anyone who could argue pro and contra on all subjects, in the
Aristotelian manner, and with knowledge of Aristotle's rules deliver two opposing
speeches in every case, or should argue, in the manner of Arcesilaus and Carneades,
against every thesis, and who combined that methodology and training with the rhet-
orical experience and practice of speaking [I have mentioned before], that person
would be the only true and perfect orator.

   There is no question that for Cicero Aristotle's primary importance hinges
on his dialectic and its application to rhetoric (cf. *Fin.* 5.10; *Tusc.* 2.9). In
Topica 1–2 he reminds the jurist Trebatius that he had recommended to
him the study of *Aristotelis Topica quaedam*, characterizing these as a sys-
tem invented by Aristotle for discovering arguments. Since he had also, as
he says, advised Trebatius that he could learn this system from 'a professor
of rhetoric', Cicero assumes that Aristotelian *Topics* fall within the rhetorical
curriculum. In *De divinatione* 2.4, as we have seen, he says that Aristotle and
Theophrastus united philosophy and rhetoric. (For Aristotle on his own, cf.
Top. 3.)[23] In the juvenile *De inventione* (2.8) that fusion is said to have taken
place only after Isocrates and Aristotle. There, however, Cicero is simply par-
roting his sources. In his maturity he plainly supposed, as he states in *Tus-*
culans 2.9, that the practice of arguing both sides of a question is the best

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[22] Cf. DL 5.3 where Aristotle is said to have trained pupils πρὸς θέσιν and to have given them
rhetorical teaching.
[23] Theophrastus' name seems to be added 'for no other reason than that Cicero knew he had
covered the same subjects in his own writings': Runia 1989, 34.

methodology both for discovering verisimilitude and for rhetorical training. He also in that context makes one of his rare references to his mentor Philo of Larissa, who, he says, divided his time between teaching rules of philosophers and rules of rhetoricians. 'Verisimilitude' or 'plausibility' is Philo's philosophical trademark. Yet it is not to Philo but to the earlier Academics Arcesilaus and Carneades and to Aristotle that Cicero's Crassus (in the passage cited above from *De oratore*) appeals in his account of the ideal orator's methodology (cf. also *De or.* 2.160–1). Philo is praised, but only once and parenthetically in the whole of *De oratore* (3.110), for the attention he gave to training students in arguments on particular points or specific legal cases; one thinks of the examples in Cicero's *Topica*, which are mainly taken from law. There are reasons for supposing that Cicero was strongly influenced by Philo in his account of the ideal orator. But if this is so, as von Arnim proposed (1898, 97–112), why does Cicero give so much more credit to Aristotle? Besides, the originality he attributes to Aristotle over *in utramque partem dicere* is unhistorical, since it omits Protagoras and the fifth-century tradition of 'opposing arguments' (*dissoi logoi*).

This last point is hardly significant, I think. Cicero's brief is to reconcile the professions of philosophy and rhetoric which had long been at loggerheads. He was clearly familiar with the Greek tradition of positing a primary inventor (*prōtos heuretēs*) for each art, and saw the value of a great name for that purpose. Having gone to the limit in playing down Plato's hostility to rhetoric, he decided to play up Aristotle's authority, rather than that of Philo, as the great philosopher who had first included rhetoric in the modern philosophical curriculum. On the evidence of *Topica* 2 he may have been aware of the originality Aristotle claims for his own *Topics* (*Soph. el.* 183b33–6).

Cicero can hardly have known anything detailed of the way Aristotle uses dialectic in his exploration of philosophical problems. So what is the basis for his constant refrain on Aristotle's importance for *in utramque partem* argument? Some scholars have supposed Cicero to be referring to Aristotle's methodology in his lost dialogues.[24] But there is no evidence that these works took this form. What Cicero has in mind, I suggest, is a handbook account of our Aristotelian *Topics* and *Rhetoric*, mediated via the rhetorical schools and further influenced by the teachings of Philo.

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[24] Wilkins 1892 commenting on *De or.* 3.80, cautiously repeated by Gigon 1959, 150.

From our modern perspective, Cicero seems to conflate, or to see no clear difference between, Aristotle's *Topics* and his *Rhetoric*.[25] If he had read these works, he would have superficial justifications for that view. In *Rhetoric* 1.1, 1355a33 Aristotle characterizes dialectic and rhetoric as the only crafts which argue to opposing conclusions. And at the beginning of the *Topics* (1.101a26) Aristotle claims that the work's methodology will be useful 'for the purpose of training'. In addition, of course, Aristotle includes 'topics' in his *Rhetoric* as well as in his dialectical treatise of that name.

We should not exclude the possibility that Cicero knew something of Aristotle's *Topics* or *Rhetoric* at first hand. However, Cicero's conflation of dialectic and rhetoric, if conflation it is, was probably due less to his own reading and reflecting than to the murky interaction between Peripatetic handbooks and the Hellenistic professors of rhetoric. On the evidence of his own *De oratore* and *Topica*, Cicero took Aristotle's interest in topical argumentation to be a contribution to rhetoric. This will explain his harping in *De oratore* on Aristotle's *topoi*, and also his vagueness in his own rhetorical works on the actual details of *in utramque partem* argument.[26] (He omits any procedural rules about what the practice involves such as those Aristotle lays down for questioner and answerer in *Topics* book 8.) We should also reckon with the possibility that Cicero knew of works accredited to Aristotle which did include paradigm arguments for and against a thesis. Alexander of Aphrodisias attests to the existence of such books.[27] In addition, Alexander uses the Greek original of *in utramque partem dicere*, εἰς ἑκάτερον μέρος ἐπιχείρησις, as one of the forms of 'training' envisaged by Aristotle in the *Topics*. This could be a loose allusion in current jargon to what Aristotle calls dialectical argument between questioner and answerer; but it may also refer to an alternative Aristotelian procedure of formal arguments pro and contra, such as Cicero seems to envisage.

[25] Cf. Huby 1989, and also Stump 1978, 20–3, 211–14; 1988, 8–9.

[26] For this point and an illuminating discussion of Cicero's comments on Aristotle's dialectic, cf. Moraux 1968, 300–7.

[27] Cf. Alexander, *In Top.* 101a26: λέγει δὲ γυμνασίαν ἤτοι τὴν γινομένην ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι πρός τινας . . . ἢ γυμνασίαν λέγοι ἂν τὴν εἰς ἑκάτερον μέρος ἐπιχείρησιν. ἦν δὲ σύνηθες τὸ τοιοῦτον εἶδος τῶν λόγων τοῖς ἀρχαίοις, καὶ τὰς συνουσίας τὰς πλείστας τοῦτον ἐποίουντο τρόπον, οὐκ ἐπὶ βιβλίων ὥσπερ νῦν (οὐ γὰρ ἦν πω τότε τοιαῦτα βιβλία), ἀλλὰ θέσεώς τινος τεθείσης εἰς ταύτην γυμνάζοντες αὑτῶν τὸ πρὸς τὰς ἐπιχειρήσεις εὑρετικὸν ἐπιχειροῦσιν, κατασκευάζοντές τε καὶ ἀνασκευάζοντες δι᾽ ἐνδόξων τὸ κείμενον. καὶ ἔστι δὲ βιβλία τοιαῦτα Ἀριστοτέλους τε καὶ Θεοφράστου γεγραμμένα ἔχοντα τὴν εἰς τὰ ἀντικείμενα δι᾽ ἐνδόξων ἐπιχείρησιν. The passage is well discussed by Moraux 1968, 301.

There are, to be sure, some closer reflections of Aristotle's *Topics* in Cicero. At *Topics* 1.11, 104b1–8 Aristotle assigns two functions to dialectical problems: they pertain either to choice and avoidance (e.g. whether pleasure is choiceworthy or not), or to truth and knowledge (e.g. whether the world is eternal or not). Although his own *Topica* is remote from Aristotle's similarly named work in most of its content, Cicero makes a similar division into theoretical and practical problems (*Top.* 81). Like Aristotle, he treats logical categories—genus, species, contraries, and so on—as material from which to derive arguments. Such points, it is easy to believe, could have been disseminated via rhetorical handbooks such as those written by the second-century BC Hermagoras of Temnos, to whom Cicero refers in *De inventione* 1.8.[28] As for the dialectical procedure of Aristotle's *Topics* book 8, Cicero does propose something strikingly similar in his *Tusculans* (cf. esp. 1.7–8), as Moraux pointed out (1968, 305–7). There Cicero makes use of an anonymous interlocutor, playing the questioner's role himself. The subject for debate, affirmed by the interlocutor, is a 'common opinion' (*endoxon*), for example, death is an evil, or the wise man is subject to passion. Cicero's strategy, as questioner, is to get the interlocutor to contradict himself. This looks genuinely Aristotelian, but that appearance may be deceptive.

In introducing the methodology (*Tusc.* 1.7–8) Cicero first calls it Socratic. Later he calls it a Peripatetic and Academic practice, initiated by Aristotle (2.9). Instead of developing that point, he alludes, parenthetically again, to Philo as someone he frequently heard, mentioning Philo's lectures on philosophical and rhetorical rules. Finally (5.10) he ascribes the dialectical method to Carneades. How do we explain Cicero's multiple accreditation? Glucker (1978, n. 79, p. 34) believes that Aristotle's *Topics* was an important influence on the sceptical Academy, but even if that were so the dialectic of Arcesilaus and Carneades had the purpose of inducing suspension of judgement, not winning an argument, the principal object of topical training envisaged by Aristotle. However, by the time of Cicero his Academic mentor Philo, claiming Carneades' support, was using *in utramque partem* methodology as a way of trying to establish *probabilia*, and that looks more like the heuristic objective of topical argument for philosophy, as stated by Aristotle at the beginning of the *Topics*—making it easier to discover truth and falsehood—than the destructive dialectic of Arcesilaus. Cicero himself, no doubt reflecting Philo's heavy-handed approach to philosophical

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[28] Cf. Mansfeld 1990*b*, 3193–7; Brittain 2001, 302–7.

history, credits Socrates with speaking against someone else's opinion because Socrates thought this a very easy way of finding verisimilitude (*Tusc.* 1.7–8). Referring to the sceptical Academy, Cicero repeatedly describes it as having the most in common with rhetoric, and implies that this is a principal reason for his allegiance to it (cf. *Fat.* 3; *Parad.* 2; *ND* 2.168).

Cicero's official view of Aristotle, as we have seen, is very similar. Unlike his Plato, however, Cicero's Aristotle cannot be substantiated by us with precision even in the field for which he claims the Stagirite's authority. I suspect that the reason for this is not simply the disequilibrium between our Aristotelian texts and those Cicero could have used, but a contemporary interpretation of Aristotle's dialectic and rhetoric that Cicero got from his mentors, especially Philo. (Which is not to say that Philo dreamed it up independently from the rhetorical tradition.) I will mention just one further detail that points that way. Although Cicero is aware of the difference between necessary and probable conclusions (cf. *Inv.* 1.75, 83), he also describes deduction or syllogistic reasoning (*ratiocinatio*) as 'a discourse that draws forth something *probabile* from the matter itself' (Inv. 57); and in *Topica* 8 he defines a 'proof' (*argumentum*) as 'a form of reasoning which gives credence to something uncertain' (*rationem quae rei dubiae faciat fidem*).[29] That proof in general should be concerned with establishing probability rather than necessity is a noteworthy upgrading of the Aristotelian enthymeme. Even if Philo would not endorse this as a point of logic, it fits his epistemology perfectly and also his interest, as Cicero tells us, in teaching rules of rhetoric as well as philosophy. In Cicero's rhetorical contexts Aristotle seems to be a name for a tradition that stretches down to the Academic Philo.

The key point in all this, of course, is that Cicero can appeal both to the *in utramque partem* methodology and to argument in favour of *probabilia* as links between philosophy and rhetoric which have Peripatetic as well as Academic authority. Antiochus had synthesized those schools in matters of doctrine, but he had no interest, so far as our record goes, in rhetoric. The insistence on the common dialectical-cum-rhetorical methodology of both schools may well be Cicero's own synthetical venture. It enables him to harmonize his rhetorical expertise with his support for both Academy and Peripatos. Thus he can claim the most illustrious authority for his manner of exploring the discrepant opinions of the Hellenistic schools.

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[29] For Roman terminology rendering Greek logical terms, cf. Prantl 1855, esp. 522–3.

FINAL REMARKS

Cicero's approved philosophers, Plato and Aristotle among the ancients, Philo and Antiochus among the moderns, turn out to have remarkable affinity to Cicero himself.[30] Plato, as well as being the prince of philosophers, is an orator *manqué* and the supreme stylist. Aristotle, also a great stylist, is the model for dialectical and rhetorical argumentation. Philo provides Cicero explicitly with his rationale for constructive exploration of divergent philosophical positions, and implicitly supports his reconciliation of philosophy and rhetoric. Finally, Antiochus, with his synthetic approach to the Academy and Peripatos, gives Cicero a basis for approving doctrines of both these schools, and even those of the Stoics, while allowing him to keep his moderately sceptical nose clean. The old Platonic and Aristotelian tradition, as Cicero tells Cato in *De finibus* 2.3, established their philosophy 'with fulness and elegance' (*copiose et eleganter*). They treated politics 'with weight and fulness' (*graviter et copiose*). In contrast with the Stoics, they formulated their dialectic 'with refinement and good taste' (*polite apteque*). They were splendid in their account of what the grand style needs and practitioners of it themselves. Or again, as Piso tells Cicero in *De finibus* 5.7, the Old Academy produced people just like Cicero himself—orators, generals, and political leaders. It all fits together a bit too well. Recognizing, as we can, the Ciceronian tinges of his Plato and Aristotle, we should also remember that what little we know of Philo and Antiochus is largely due to Cicero himself. Their pupil had a strong personality, and we will never discover how much of it has rubbed off on the positions he ascribes to them, or what he took from them without telling us.

Cicero, as he knew himself, was primarily an orator. He was better qualified to criticize the literacy of the Stoics and Epicureans than their scientific achievements. Still, there is something original and challenging in his insistence that good style is as necessary to philosophy as is well-grounded argument to politics and lawcourts. That conviction, moreover, is crucial to understanding his own philosophical sympathies.

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[30] Görler 1989, 247, comments well on the imbalance between Cicero's high praise of the Peripatos and his small interest in Peripatetic philosophy: 'Für Ciceros Einschätzung ist es bezeichnend, dass er gelegentlich sich selbst als Parallelfall nennt: wie die gennanten Peripatetiker habe er auch die politische Rhetorik und die Philosophie zusammengeführt.' Cf. MacKendrick 1989, 43: '[Cicero's] rhetorical ideal was based on himself, just as his views of Roman history are self-centered.'

Fieri autem potest ut recte quis sentiat et id, quod sentit, polite eloqui non possit; sed man-
dare quemquam litteris cogitationes suas, qui eas nec disponere nec illustrare possit nec
delectatione aliqua adlicere lectorem, hominis est intemperanter abutentis et otio et litteris
. . . hanc enim perfectam philosophiam semper iudicavi, quae de maximis quaestionibus
copiose posset ornateque dicere. (*Tusc.* 1.6–7)

It is possible for someone to have a correct opinion and not to be able to express it
with style. But to assign one's reflections to literature without the ability to organize
or clarify them or do anything to captivate the reader is the mark of a man who
squanders leisure and literature . . . I have always judged that philosophy to be perfect
which can discuss the biggest questions fully and elegantly.

No wonder Cicero made Plato the prince of philosophers.

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Cicero's politics in *De officiis*

CICERO AND ROMAN IDEOLOGY

Modern historians tend to be very severe in assessing Cicero's political acumen, especially the stance he adopted at the end of his life. 'In the Rome of Antony and Octavian he was an obstructive anachronism', a man who 'never penetrated to an understanding of the basic economic and social issues that cried out for remedy, and which were bound to be a source of political instability until something was done about them.' These assessments, which I take from David Stockton, are fairly representative.[1] From a Hegelian view of history, Cicero in 44–43 BC was not the man for the hour. His attempts in the *Philippics* to rally support for a Republican opposition to Antony show how little he understood the linkage between political effectiveness or insight and real influence over the sources of power. So, with hindsight, it may be said. Yet, on a longer view of history, Cicero's political thought grows in interest—less because of its practical relevance to his own times than as an attempt to diagnose what had gone wrong in Roman Republican ideology and what would be required to put it right.

The work I am referring to as the basis for this claim is *De officiis* (henceforth *Off.*). It is one of the 'great books', but no one today perhaps can read it with fresh eyes. Even complete newcomers are likely to think they have been there before. 'Tully's Offices' sounds more like disused business premises

[1] Stockton 1971, 306, 334. Mitchell 1991, 325–6, is similar in judgement though gentler in formulation. For a much more sympathetic view, cf. Habicht 1990.

than the extremely influential work that it is. This last and most original of Cicero's philosophical essays is a victim of its enormous popularity in the peri-od from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century. It was first printed in 1465 at Mainz, the earliest classical text to benefit from that invention. Notwith-standing its title and explicit rationale, *Off.* seems to me to tell us more about Cicero's politics than anything else that he wrote. Ostensibly the work is an essay on practical ethics, two-thirds of it adapted from the Stoic philosopher Panaetius, but, as recent commentators recognize, the ethical problems that Cicero treats in it are not those of persons in general.[2] His detailed focus throughout is on actual and potential statesmen, the Roman ruling elite. In addition, Cicero outlines a theory of justice which requires him to specify repeatedly what he takes the role of the state to be and in what relationship the most prominent individuals stand and should stand to the state.[3] The absence of a treatment of constitutions and political offices is no impediment to the work's clear political message, as we shall see. Cicero throughout assumes the legitimacy and appropriateness of Republican institutions (senate, etc.) and the conservative tradition of Roman social hierarchy he had persistently defended under his slogan, the 'harmony of classes' (*concordia ordinum*).[4]

The civil wars had challenged those assumptions and wrecked his public life. At the very time he was composing *Off.*, he was in the course of mak-ing his final political comeback. In this study I want to focus attention on Cicero's practical concerns, as we can trace them through his correspond-ence as well as in his formal writings, because those concerns can help to identify the central thoughts of *Off.* Complex though it is, the work is above all, I will argue, Cicero's political testament. He composed it as much for himself and his afterlife as for his son, the work's formal addressee. The ten-sions in *Off.* at its theoretical level (especially on the value to be assigned to glory) reflect contentious issues of which Cicero was acutely aware for sever-al reasons. As the ambitious Roman that he was, he could not discount the value of glory to himself and the dominant role of glory in Roman ideology.[5]

[2] Cf. Gill 1988, 180–3, and Gabba 1979, 118, 124–5.

[3] These points are brought out well by Atkins 1989, parts of whose dissertation are digested in Atkins 1990. For further study of them and of Cicero's political thought in general, cf. Wood (1988).

[4] For a clear grasp of this point, see Gabba 1979, which did not come to my attention until I was finalizing this essay for publication. His work differs from mine in its emphases and methodology, but we arrive independently at similar conclusions concerning Cicero's personal engagement and ideological objectives in *Off.*

[5] A critical comment on Cicero by Syme 1939, 146, makes the point in a way that is especially relevant to this essay: 'Eager to maintain his *dignitas* as a consular, and to pursue *gloria* as an

Yet, at the same time, he had come to believe that glory, instead of being earned by actions benefiting the state, was the fair-sounding pretext for the self-aggrandizement of those who were destroying the Republic. He also saw that passion for power, manifested by glory, was frequently linked to acquisitiveness for resources which could put people's property rights at risk. (He himself had lost a house in the year 58 when he was forced to leave Rome.) In *Off.* Cicero puts Greek philosophy to work in an attempt to set Roman values, especially glory and wealth, within an ethical framework which will show that they are proper objectives if and only if they are combined with justice. The contemporary relevance of this thesis is threefold: a systematic defence of what was implicitly good about the *mos maiorum*, as Cicero interprets it; a sharp attack on the perversion of that ideology by Caesar and other adventurers; and a defence of Cicero's own values, bolstering his morale for the battle against Antony he has just begun.

These points, give or take differences of emphasis and expression, are rather obvious once we read what Cicero has written instead of speculating on his indebtedness to Panaetius. What is less obvious about *Off.*, thanks perhaps to the smoothness of Cicero's style, is the work's radical nature in its effort to reform Roman ideology. Approaching *Off.*, as Cicero encourages us to do, via his adaptation of Panaetius, interpreters are tempted to read it as Greek philosophy in Roman dress, or—to cite Miriam Griffin—as 'a fusion of Greek philosophical precepts with the traditional values of the great Roman statesmen of the past'.[6] That temptation, I want to argue, should be resisted. It is too bland to represent Cicero's existential situation, at the time when he wrote. It is also too bland to register the problems Roman ideology had generated and Cicero's proposed solutions to them.

By Roman ideology I refer to the system of values expressed by such terms as *virtus*, *dignitas*, *honestas*, *splendor*, *decus*, and, above all, *laus* and *gloria*. All of these words signify honour, rank, worth, status. They indicate at the limit what a noble Roman would give his life for. This Roman honour code, as I shall call it from now on, was a value system demanding both achievement in public life and public recognition of that achievement.[7] As Cicero

orator and statesman, Cicero did not exhibit the measure of loyalty and constancy of Roman *virtus* and aristocratic *magnitudo animi* that would have justified the exorbitant claims of his personal ambition.' Cf. also Sullivan 1941, 382: 'Few men, ancient or modern, have loved glory more ardently or pursued it more tirelessly than Marcus Tullius Cicero.'

[6] Griffin and Atkins 1991, p. xxviii.

[7] For the link between glory and popular recognition, cf. Knoche 1934.

himself defines glory, in his juvenile rhetorical essay *De inventione* (2.166), it is 'someone's widespread reputation combined with praise'. In his earlier speeches Cicero had no hesitation in identifying himself as intensely ambitious for glory and in regarding the survival of glory beyond one's lifetime as the only spur to patriotic achievement. [8] At this stage of his career, with the crowning achievement of a consulship in the offing, he seemed to see nothing problematic in the unconditional desirability of glory. As the years passed, however, his comments on glory become more qualified and equivocal.[9] Personal disappointments must have contributed to this shift, but the deeper explanation, I believe, is Cicero's recognition that passion for glory was degenerating into a euphemism for personal ambition at the expense of the health and stability of society.

The kind of action that customarily gained a man glory was service, especially military service, for the state. These actions were not, in terms of the pieties of the honour code, self-seeking in their motivation. They were 'honourable' (*honesta*), 'useful' (*utilia*) to the state rather than the individual, who might well lose his life in their performance. However, glory was the accepted motivation and personal objective of such deeds. The glory a Roman noble could achieve, however *honestum* its sphere of action might be, was supremely *utile* to his competitive lifestyle.

An ideology of this kind is radically unstable, and that for two reasons. First, it conflates what is socially desirable and therefore deserving of honour with what is personally advantageous. Secondly, it is always at risk of sliding from praiseworthy to praise conferred, and from honourable to honour given. Or, to put it another way, the ideology is always at risk of deriving ethical worth from material status, and of using the glory and wealth that accrue to the powerful as absolute standards of their actual merit. Cicero, more clearly than any other Roman of his immediate time except perhaps Lucretius, recognized the instability I have indicated, and identified it as the primary cause of the Republic's dissolution.[10] He saw, in other words, that ambition for power,

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[8] Cf. *Rab. perd.* 10.29, *Archia* 6.14, 11.28 (where Cicero speaks of himself), and his generalizations in the following passages: *Manil.* 7, *semper appetentes gloriae praeter ceteras gentes atque avidi laudis fuistis*; *Leg. agr.* 2.91, *ubi honos publice non est, ibi gloriae cupiditas esse non potest.*

[9] In works before the latest philosophica, see *Pro Sestio* 139 (dated 56), *Rep.* 6. 19, the elder Scipio's rhetorical question: *quam celebritatem sermonis hominum aut quam expetendam consequi gloriam potes?*, and *Fam.* 15.4.13 (Cicero to Cato, dated 51), *testis est consulatus meus, in quo, sic at in reliqua vita, fateor ea me studiose secutum ex quibus vera gloria nasci posset, ipsam quidem gloriam per se numquam putavi expetendam.*

[10] On Lucretius and ideology, see the interesting, though sometimes erratic, observations of Minyard 1985. Of Cicero's younger contemporaries, Sallust comes closest to him in tracing the

status, and wealth had become the per se values of Rome's contemporary lead-
ers. Glory, which was *utile* to the individual, had become divorced from its
ideological basis in *honestum*, virtuous conduct including, especially, service
on behalf of the state. On my reading of *Off.*, what is chiefly interesting about
the work is Cicero's attempt to reintegrate the *utile* and the *honestum*, and to
do so in a way that would repair the instability I have mentioned.

Towards the end of book 3 he writes as follows:

People invert the fundamental principles of nature when they separate utility from
honourableness. For we all pursue utility and are pulled towards it; we cannot act
otherwise ... But because we cannot discover it except in *laus*, *decus*, and *honestas*,
we take these latter to be primary and supreme, while we treat utility as something
necessary rather than *splendidum*. (3.101)

In this passage Cicero is not identifying the concepts of *utile* and *honestum*.
He is saying that no individual or society can derive genuine benefit from
actions that are not grounded in morality; the moral is an essential attribute
of the useful. Cicero preserves the traditional connotations of the buzzwords
laus, *decus*, and so on, but thanks to his use of Greek philosophy he has
shifted their denotations. He began the whole work by outlining what he calls
'the form and face, as it were, of *honestum*' (1.15). The *honestum* that always
attaches to what is genuinely *utile*, on Cicero's account, is not the vaguely
'honourable' of traditional ideology, but a Stoicized concept of ethical excel-
lence, in which justice is the principal constituent. By emphasizing, as he does
throughout, the per se value of *honestum*, Cicero alters the term's denotation
from its link with actual honour to what is honourable whether or not any-
one is looking.[11] Just before his remark about the form and face of *honestum*,
he characterizes this quality as something which 'even if it is not ennobled

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ills of Rome to perverted ideology. The early sections of the *Bellum Catilinae* can be interestingly
compared with *Off.* Sallust, like the younger Cicero (n. 9 above), was motivated by the desire for
glory (2.9–3.5), and he refers the early development of Rome to passion and competition for that
objective (7.3–7). For Sallust, this ideology, which was essentially good for the state, has been
corrupted by wealth and greed, which are the modern routes to glory and power (cf. 12.1). Sallust's
Catiline, like Cicero's Caesar, is a man of inordinate *cupiditas* (5.4–6). I think, however, that Sallust
is less decisive than Cicero in identifying *gloria* itself as the most unstable element in the ideology
that he criticizes. For this reason I am not fully convinced by Gabba 1979, 137–41, that Sallust
was directly influenced by Cicero's work.

[11] Such thoughts are not, of course, new in Cicero; cf. for instance the attack in *Leg.* 1.41 on a
purely prudential respect for justice, where a distinction is drawn between those who are truly *boni*,
because they are motivated by *ipsum honestum*, and the *callidi*, who are motivated *utilitate aliqua
atque fructu*. What is chiefly original about *Off.* is not Cicero's ethical framework but his application
of it to immediate political problems.

is *honestum*, and, as we correctly say, is naturally praiseworthy even if it is praised by no one'. This punning definition is an indication of his radical attempt to detach 'the honourable' from the traditional honour code and to conceptualize it in terms of what is intrinsically or naturally good.

In order to take the measure of this point, it is necessary to treat the professed topic of *Off.* — the relation between *honestum* and *utile* (1.9; cf. 2.9, 3.7) — as something more than a standard theme of Greek ethics.[12] Without Greek philosophy Cicero would not have structured his discussion as he does. That is clear. But, if I am right, Cicero's *honestum* is very much his own remodelling of a traditional Roman concept. Even though his *honestum* has antecedents in Greek philosophy, especially Stoicism, the questions he poses about its relation to *utile* have as much to do with Roman ideology and practice as with the Greek theoretical background he draws on.

These remarks on Cicero's reform of traditional ideology are merely a preface to the material that follows. There I shall first examine his political and ethical concerns at the time he was writing *Off.* Next I propose to look, in some detail, at the contrasts he draws in *Off.* between values anchored to his concept of *honestum* and those that lack this grounding. Those contrasts continuously bear upon contemporary politics, and especially on himself as a defender of the Republic and Caesar as the Republic's destroyer.

I shall refer to professional Stoic philosophers from time to time, but the question of how Cicero has used his sources, especially Panaetius, is not an objective of this chapter.[13] I seek to interpret *Off.* as a work whose political message is through-and-through Ciceronian. What that message tells us about Stoic theory, as distinct from its possible application, is distinctly subordinate in this essay.

[12] Here I venture to disagree once again with Miriam Griffin, in Griffin and Atkins 1991, p. xxii, where she writes: 'Cicero's readers would . . . not have been surprised to find him approaching the question of how one should behave by considering first "the honourable", then "the beneficial", and expecting the answers to agree in general.' Her context for this comment is the eudaimonist tradition of Greek ethics. It seems to me that Cicero's readers will have been more familiar with contexts like that of his *De oratore* 2.335, in which *honestas* and *utilitas* are assumed to conflict, at least in their apparent applications. If that is right, Cicero's Roman message in *Off.* is more radical than she seems to acknowledge.

[13] Atkins 1989 rightly complains that interpreters of *Off.* have tended to be more interested in the elusive Panaetius than the palpable Cicero. That is apparent even in the fine work of Bringmann 1971, although he is one of the few German scholars to have sought to connect Cicero's philosophical interests with his practical concerns. For brief and sensible comments on how little we can determine the limits of Cicero's indebtedness to Panaetius, cf. Gabba 1979, 120–4. As he observes: 'La determinazione di quanto appartiene a Panezio e a Cicerone nel de officiis varia soggettivamente a seconda dell'idea che ogni studioso si e fatto dell'opera di Panezio.'

THE BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

On about 28 October of 44 BC Cicero wrote to Atticus: 'Here [he is at Puteoli or Cumae] I philosophize (what else?) and expound the subject of Duty on a magnificent scale. I am addressing the book to Marcus. From father to son what better theme? Then to other projects. Yes, there will be work to show for this absence of mine' (*Att.* 15.13a).[14] This is the earliest explicit mention of *Off.* Cicero describes his project to Atticus with the word *kathēkon*, the term popularized by Stoic philosophers for referring to any activity that is 'proper' to the nature of a living creature. In the same letter he writes to Atticus as follows: 'I think my speech must just about have reached you. Oh, how nervous I am about what you will think of it. And yet what is that to me, since it won't see the light unless the republic is restored.' The speech is the second *Philippic*, that savage demolition of Mark Antony which Cicero wrote but never delivered in response to Antony's attack on him in the senate on 19 September. In his peroration Cicero describes Caesar's murderers as men 'who attained an almost boundless glory' (114). He calls on Antony, by contrast, to recognize the difference between personal profit (*lucrum*) and praise (*laus*). Yet Antony, like someone sick, is too insensitive in his criminal greed (*avaritia*) to have the taste of 'true praise' (*vera laus*). Antony is no Caesar. They are comparable only in their 'passion for power' (*cupiditas dominandi*).

The second *Philippic* was the unpublishable speech dispatched to Atticus three days before Cicero's report of his progress on *Off.* By 5 November, some nine days later, he had received a favourable reaction to the speech from Atticus. In a letter acknowledging Atticus' response, Cicero says he has finished 'the subject of Duty, so far as Panaetius goes, in two books' (*Att.* 16.11). He has not completed the whole work, according to his projected plan, since he needs a third book to deal with what Panaetius omitted—questions of apparent conflict between *honestum* and *utile*. He presumably worked on this final book in the immediate future. There is no further chronological information about *Off.*, but he may well have completed the whole work by the end of November.

If he did not begin it before 28 October, the rate of composition is astonishing—even for Cicero, and even if, as is too readily assumed, he based

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[14] Here, and in my other citations from Cicero's letters, I largely follow the translations by D. R. Shackleton Bailey in the editions of Cicero's correspondence he has published in the series Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries.

himself very closely on Panaetius in the first two books. Cicero himself says that he chiefly followed Panaetius in those books, *correctione quadam adhibita* (3.7).[15] At the very least his 'revision' of Panaetius accommodated the frequent allusions to Roman history after Panaetius' lifetime as well as the references to Cicero's own affairs. In my opinion, Cicero's own input permeates the work throughout. He was capable of writing a whole book (i.e. papyrus roll) in a single week of travel. Still, there is no necessity to date his first thoughts about *Off.* by his first mention of it to Atticus on 28 October.[16] I am inclined, for a variety of reasons, to think that he planned and even drafted parts of it during the summer and early autumn of 44. *Off.* certainly followed, and probably coincided with and preceded, the composition of the first two *Philippics*.

During the nine days which saw the completion of the first two books Cicero was also occupied with other things. He was in daily correspondence with Octavian, who had explained his war plans against Antony to Cicero on 2 or 3 November. On 4 November, the day before Cicero told Atticus he had completed the first two books of *Off.*, he had had two letters from Octavian: 'wants me to return to Rome at once, says he wants to work through the Senate' (*Att.* 16.9). Cicero, as he had written to Atticus in the previous letter, 'was never in a greater quandary' (*Att.* 16.8). He would shortly return to the political arena. *Off.* would prove to be the last of his philosophical essays ostensibly modelled on Greek philosophy.

[15] See. *Off.* 1.6: *sequemur igitur hoc quidem tempore et hac in quaestione potissimum Stoicos non ut interpretes, sed, ut solemus, e fontibus eorum iudicio arbitrioque nostro, quantum quoque modo videbitur, hauriemus.* Cicero professes to maintain his philosophical stance as an Academic, who is entitled to argue for, without being committed to, the truth of a doctrine he finds *maxime probabile*, such as that of the Stoics (cf. *Off.* 2.8, 3.20). However, in *Off.* he does not explore the arguments for and against a thesis, in the Academic manner he uses in the main philosophical works of his later years. Annas 1989, 172, may be right to see something of the Academic Cicero in *Off.* book 3, for which he had no Panaetian model. But my own view is that in *Off.*, taken as a whole, Cicero pays only lip-service to his Academic identity. I find his personal involvement in the issues too evident to agree with Annas (ibid.) that he has 'no substantial position' of his own. For arguments, which I do not find persuasive, that 'the real motives for the *De Officiis* may be found in its connection with Cicero's earlier [philosophical] programme', as distinct from immediate political circumstances, cf. Hunt 1954, 159 ff.

[16] For a close study of the composition of *Off.*, cf. Fiérez 1953. Fiérez makes a number of good points about the timing and composition of the third book. What I find implausible is his assumption that Cicero had no thoughts about writing the whole work before setting off on his travels on 28 October. If he is right, Cicero did not know about Panaetius' failure to treat of apparent conflicts between *honestum* and *utile* before reading the latter's work in the period 28 October–5 November. It seems to me most unlikely that Cicero's acquaintance with Panaetius' books could be so recent; cf. Griffin and Atkins 1991, p. xxi.

The modelling is evident, especially in the opening of book 1, but does it reach into the core of the work? It was written, as we have seen, during the time when Cicero's hostility to Antony had become public, when he was himself beset by assessments of the political situation and the public role he might return to. We can hardly regard the thoughts of *Off.* on proper statesmanship, vilification of Caesar, and self-congratulation as literary diversion or armchair theorizing. They match with extraordinary coincidence Cicero's actual fears and hopes at this time.

How does *Off.* stand in relation to Cicero's previous writings on philosophy? By the Ides of March he had probably completed the main body of this work except for the second book of *De divinatione*. The preface of that book refers to all the philosophy he had written before Caesar's murder, and includes, as a recent composition, *De senectute*. This little book, purporting to be an address by the elder Cato, looks forward to *Off.* in its practical ethics and idealization of the old Republic. But it belongs with the more technical writings on philosophy in its detached and even optimistic tone. The difference is evident when we compare sections of *De amicitia*. This was planned as a companion piece to *De senectute*, but its composition certainly postdates the Ides of March. As with *De senectute*, Cicero sets this work in the second century BC, choosing Laelius as its principal speaker. But he clearly has the factions following Caesar's murder in mind when Laelius considers the question: 'How far should love go in friendship?' (*Am.* 36). The answer is that one is never justified in doing wrong for the sake of a friend, least of all against the interests of the state: the friends of Tiberius Gracchus were right to desert him when he was overturning the Republic.

For Cicero, I think, the Gracchi are examples who generally resonate beyond themselves, attracting our attention to the more recent revolutionaries, Sulla, Caesar, and Antony. Laelius develops his sermon on the limits of friendship by assessing and predicting the dire state of Rome: Tiberius Gracchus so far departed from the *mos maiorum* that he actually ruled as a king for some months. What is to be expected from the tribunate of Gaius? 'I think I already see the people alienated from the Senate and the chief affairs of state being managed by the rule of the mob' (*Am.* 41). The forward reference to Caesar and Antony is patent. The ties of *amicitia* were an urgent problem in the confusion following the assassination of Caesar. Probably in October of 44 Cicero told Matius in a letter that he found his loyalty to Caesar praiseworthy; but others say 'national freedom should be preferred to the life of a friend' (*Fam.* 11.27). Matius recognized Cicero's disingenuousness, and

passionately defended the friendship he had had with Caesar on the ground that he had gained nothing from it and had done nothing for Caesar which deserved blame (ibid. 28).

There are other signs that Cicero's writings after the Ides of March were no longer part of the programme of philosophical works he had embarked on in the previous year. Between 4 May and 25 October (the date of his sending the second *Philippic* to Atticus) we hear six cryptic references to a dialogue he planned to write on Caesar's murder. He sometimes refers to this work by the euphemism *Heracleideion*, meaning a dialogue written in the style of Heracleides Ponticus.[17] Cicero's friends apart from Atticus knew about his intentions, for on 25 May Trebonius, one of the liberators, wrote to him from Athens, pleading for a significant part in the dialogue and enclosing a satirical attack on Antony for Cicero to read (*Fam.* 12.16). So far as we know, he never completed the work. Judging from his guarded allusions to it, he intended something too dangerous to risk being leaked. The dangers must be related to his fears of Antony. Thus on 3 May (*Att.* 14.17.6) he wrote to Atticus: 'There was less risk in attacking that wicked party when the tyrant was alive than now that he is dead.' On 24 May he wrote: 'I shall have to await a more suitable moment' (*Att.* 15.4.3). And, to Atticus on 3 July: 'I shall hammer out something in the style of Heracleides for you to keep tucked away in your archives' (*Att.* 15.27.3). Although he was still talking about the *Heracleideion* on 25 October (*Att.* 15. 13.3), it no longer appears to be something dangerous. On that very day (cf. *Att.* 15. 13.1) Cicero had sent Atticus the second *Philippic*, an attack on Antony too blistering for Atticus to publish at the time. Besides, Cicero was probably already hard at work on *Off*.

I propose that this projected dialogue on Caesar's murder was overtaken by events (especially the advance of Octavian) and by Cicero's other compositions. If he had wished, when first thinking of it, to avoid an open breach with Antony, that had ceased to be possible by September. Cicero had found other outlets for expressing his unqualified support for the liberators or tyrannicides, his criticism of Caesar's political morality, and his analysis of Antony as the epitome of Roman degeneration.

One of these outlets, we can readily conjecture, was the work *De gloria*, which reached Petrarch but failed to survive much later.[18] On 3 July Cicero

[17] For the meaning of the term *Heracleideion*, see Gottschalk 1980, 8, and Bringmann 1971, 198.

[18] The surviving fragments of *De gloria* are too few to give a sense of the work's content and rationale. For discussion, see Büchner 1964, 430, who concludes that the work involved an attack

tells Atticus he will soon be sending him this work, and in the next sentence he promises to get on with the *Heracleideion* (*Att.* 15.27.2). A week later he tells Atticus: 'I am sending you *De gloria*, so you will keep it safe as usual. But make a note of the two excerpts for Salvius to read to a suitable audience at dinner—nothing more' (*Att.* 16.2.6). Once again he mentions his intention of writing the *Heracleideion*.

Why should Cicero's work on glory have been dangerous for him to pub-licize? No doubt it attacked Caesar's ambition and justified his murder, but Cicero and other Republicans had been doing that for months. Perhaps the work by implication was also an attack on Antony, and in July of 44 Cicero was still anxious to retain Antony's good-will, though in private he had been lamenting his survival ever since the Ides of March. Also, there was the incal-culable new factor of the young Octavian, dedicated to avenging Caesar and celebrating the *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris* at Rome during the last days of the month. Of one thing we can be fairly certain: Cicero was in no confident mood at the time he wrote *De gloria*. On 25 July, when he tells Atticus he has sent him the book, he is about to leave Italy for Greece, with the remark that he is not running away from any immediate danger (*Att.* 16.6). The *De gloria* may have been a salve to his conscience, asserting Republican values in uncompromising words if not in deeds.

Glory, friendship, and *officium*—these titles of Cicero's main literary productions (excepting the *Philippics*) after the death of Caesar mesh completely with his epistolary thoughts and political concerns in the period April to November of 44 BC. They support the assumption that his philosophical work at this time has an existential and political significance that it lacked before. That assumption is borne out, in my opinion, not only by the contemporary allusions, rhetoric, and autobiographical passages of *Off.* but also by the work's highly selective treatment of its topic. Cicero may well have begun thinking about *Off.* immediately after he dispatched *De gloria* to Atticus. That chronology would help to explain why the topic of glory looms so large in the first two books of *Off.* This work could be, or have become, what he refers to as 'the larger theme' in the opening sentence of the *Topica*, which he sent to Trebatius on 28 July (*Fam.* 7.19).

on Caesar; Bringmann 1971, 199, who agrees with Büchner; and Syme 1939, 145, who writes: '*De gloria* was written, no doubt showing how far, for all their splendour and power, Crassus, Caesar and Pompey had fallen short of genuine renown.'

GLORY IN *DE OFFICIIS*: CAESAR AND CICERO

In my introductory remarks I commented on the instability of traditional Roman ideology, emphasizing the central but equivocal value assigned to glory. In this section I want to show how Cicero uses glory in *Off.* both as a concept that can explain deviations from what is truly deserving of honour (*honestum*), and also as a value that, when properly understood, is a legitimate and necessary aspiration for the just statesman. A central element of his politics in *Off.* is a reform of the Roman honour code, identifying the devastation that passion for glory has caused and bringing the value under the control of justice. In developing these points he cites Caesar as his principal bad example and himself as a paradigm of someone whose life manifests qualities indicating the proper perspective on glory. After a brief survey of the material, I will consider how it relates to Stoic thinking on fame and to Cicero's treatment of glory in his earlier works.

'The passion for glory is to be avoided' (*cavenda . . . est gloriae cupiditas*, 1.68). Exemplifying the need for this injunction, the villainous Caesar enters early in book 1. Cicero's context is the virtue of justice, which he treats at length after perfunctory remarks about the first of the four cardinal virtues, wisdom. Justice, grounded in human beings' natural sociability, has two principal functions—the prevention of unprovoked aggression (*iniuria*) and the proper use of private and common property (1.20). The chief threats to justice are the passions, and of passions the most damaging is the desire for personal gain. That passion may take the form of monetary greed (as with Crassus, 1.25), but it is principally associated with 'military or civil offices and glory' (*imperiorum, honorum, gloriae cupiditas*)—the traditional honour code, in other words. Caesar's ambition for pre-eminence drove him 'to overturn all laws of gods and men' (1.26). Unfortunately (ibid.), such passion for glory is typically found in 'the greatest minds and the most brilliant talents' (*in maximis animis splendidissimisque ingeniis*). Generosity (*liberalitas*) is also an aspect of justice, but generosity too becomes perverted in those 'desirous of splendour and glory' (*cupidi splendoris et gloriae*, 1.43), who steal from one in order to enrich another. Such actions, by Sulla and Caesar, were unjust since the principles of justice require that no one be injured in a benevolent act. Moreover it is often the case that apparently generous acts spring not from natural benevolence but from 'a kind of glory' (1.44).

Of all the forms of human association that make claims on our affection, none can take precedence over one's country: 'So much the more abhorrent is the brutality of those who have mauled their native land with every crime and who have been and are busy in destroying it completely' (1.57). Antony is never named in *Off.*, but it is difficult to avoid seeing a pointed allusion to him in this attack on persons involved in Rome's present power-struggle.

Owing to their perverted passions Caesar (and Antony) fail the Ciceronian test of justice. He turns next to the virtue of courage (*fortitudo*, 1.61–92). In popular belief courage is associated with the act of a 'great mind' (*magnus animus*) contemptuous of human fortune (1.61). Indicating the problematic connotations of glory, Cicero remarks that: 'No one has attained praise (*laus*) who has acquired the glory belonging to courage (*fortitudinis gloriam*) by treachery and scheming' (1.62). With explicit appeals to Stoicism and to Plato (1.62–3), Cicero qualifies the common conception.[19] 'Elevation of mind' (*animi elatio*) is no more a sufficient condition of courage than it is of justice, since without justice such a disposition can lead to 'excessive passion for power' (*nimia cupiditas principatus*, 1.64). 'Greatness of mind' that takes nature's *honestum* as its basis focuses not on glory but on 'deeds' (*facta*, 1.65).[20] After making this bold correction to the honour code, Cicero posits a direct correlation between 'greatness of mind', passion for glory, and the tendency to injustice (1.64). However, he is sufficiently a part of the ideology he is criticizing to add at once (1.65): 'This is a very slippery topic, because scarcely anyone can be found who, after undertaking efforts and experiencing dangers, does not desire glory as a reward for his achievements.' Still, he insists, 'all the splendour, grandeur, and usefulness' (*utilitas*) of courage demand exploits that proceed from the judgement that 'what is honourable and fitting' (*honestum decorumque*) is the only thing that is 'admirable, desirable, and worth striving for' (1.66–7). What is strictly required, then, of a truly courageous disposition is commitment to the Stoic thesis that only the morally good is unconditionally worthwhile. In addition, the truly courageous man is master of desire and pleasure. These two resorts to Stoic theory give Cicero the means

[19] Cicero says here that the Stoics 'define' courage as 'the virtue that fights on behalf of fairness' (*aequitas*). Possibly Panaetius did so, but the standard Stoic definitions of courage make no explicit reference to justice. They make it merely implicit, inasmuch as 'the virtues are inter-entailing'; see LS ch. 61, esp. 61F. Cicero's allusions to Plato are more or less exact citations from *Menex.* 246c and *Laches* 197b.
[20] According to Knoche 1934, Cicero is the earliest Roman author who ranks deeds above glory, as here, or *virtus* above glory, as in *Tusc.* 3.3.

of indicating his revisionary purposes, and to focus them on contemporary Rome. Once again, moreover, he reminds his readers to avoid the passions for wealth and glory. The latter is the thief of freedom (*libertas*), and freedom is the supreme challenge for the exceptional man. 'Military commands should not be sought after; or rather, they should sometimes be declined and sometimes resigned' (1.68). Caesar, then, fails the test of courage.

This criticism of military adventurism prepares the way for a further attack on the popular view of the 'great man' (*magnus animus*) within the context of courage. By a series of examples that end with his own consulship, Cicero claims that the courageous achievements of statesmen are no less resplendent than those of generals, who have frequently sought war 'out of passion for glory' (*propter gloriae cupiditatem*, 1.74).[21] His own civilian stand against Catiline is a glory that his son will inherit from him (1.78).

Cicero's boasting at this point does his case against the honour code no good. But it is interesting as an indication of his own deep involvement in the value system he is trying to reform. A few pages later he corrects the impression he may have given of assigning per se value to his own achievements. Would-be statesmen must be prepared to risk everything that belongs to them for the sake of the community, including especially their rank and glory (1.83).

On the evidence of *Off.* book 1, glory appears to be something that not only lacks any necessary link with 'what is morally good' (*honestum*), which is the book's main theme, but is also frequently desired in ways that are directly opposed to justice and genuine courage. Passion for glory is Cicero's primary diagnosis of what was ruining the Republic. Is he proposing, notwithstanding his lapse into self-congratulation, that Roman ideology should dispense with glory? He comes close to suggesting this at times, but his politics in *Off.* would be hopelessly out of touch with practicality if he had proposed, or actually desired, to erase a value that was so strongly entrenched in Roman consciousness. So the case against glory mounted in book 1 is followed in book 2 by a disquisition on the proper rationale for seeking it and making use of it. Are the two accounts consistent? If they are to pass this test, Cicero needs to show that the glory it is proper to pursue, according to book 2, is in complete harmony with the *honestum* that constitutes the only good

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[21] Caesar himself (*BG* 7.50.4) speaks of leading his men into danger, *cupiditate gloriae adductus.* Cf. Sallust, *Cat.* 5.4–5, whose Catiline is *ardens in cupiditatibus*; *nimis alta semper cupiebat*; *lubido maxima invaserat rei publicae capiundae.*

according to book 1. In addition, he needs to explain where glory fits in the hierarchy of goals that a would-be Roman Stoic could adopt as his plan of life. With a certain degree of charity I think we can conclude that Cicero does a good job in trying to meet these conditions.

The case against glory as an unconditional objective was that its pursuit had frequently been in conflict with justice. The case to be mounted in its favour will be that it is something 'useful' (*utile*) if and only if it is secured on the basis of justice.[22] The structure of *Off.*, presenting the *utile* after the *honestum*, was dictated to Cicero by his Panaetian model. But Cicero uses that structure as his way of indicating the role that glory should play in the value system of a Roman statesman. In order to understand his general strategy in book 2, it is essential to recognize that although the values he is seeking to justify are *utilia*, that is, not intrinsically moral, he assumes at the outset that *virtus*, the principle of morality, is instrumental in the sphere of *utilitas*. 'I postulate', he says, 'that virtue has the function of uniting people's minds and consolidating them with a view to their own interests' (*usus*, 2.17). *Virtus* here signifies justice in particular, the social benefits of which are his dominant theme. As we shall see in my final section, Cicero tries to prove more than once that an individual's interests, properly construed, coincide with the interests of the community, and vice versa. On the surface, glory looks like a prime example of something that is exclusively in the interests of its individual owner. What Cicero wants to argue, I think, is that glory, when justly pursued, is something that benefits the community no less than its individual recipient.

The *utilia* with which book 2 is ostensibly concerned include all the 'advantages of life' (*commoda vitae*), like health and wealth. In terms of Stoic theory, these fall within the class of 'preferred indifferents'; they are things which, circumstances permitting, it is natural and rational to prefer to their opposites, although the having of them is not itself a mark of goodness and happiness.[23] Cicero, however, shows little interest in such technicalities or in 'the advantages of life', taken as a whole. He largely restricts his discussion to one theme—the means a Roman of the elite class should employ in order to gain friends and supporters (2.20). Of these means, the one he focuses on, which controls his discussion throughout, is glory. As in book 1, but still

[22] Cicero had already indicated the equivocal value of glory in *Leg* 3.32 where, using *honos* and *gloria* in a purely descriptive sense, he had used these terms to identify the 'very few persons' with the power *vel corrumpere mores civitatis vel corrigere*.

[23] For the complex doctrine of 'preferred indifferents', see LS ch. 58.

more prominently, his discussion often involves a character contrast between Caesar and himself.

Before getting to glory Cicero presents Sulla, and especially Caesar, as paradigms of the wrong way to gain supporters. Caesar had power and inspired fear, but his assassination proves that 'affection' (*benevolentia*) is the only sound basis for attracting popular support (2.23–9). The statesman's need for this is presented by Cicero as a particular instance of the prime *utile* that everyone, whether prominent or ordinary, requires—loyal and admiring friends. He does not discuss friendship here, excusing himself by reference to his book *Laelius* (2.31). What we need to insert—which he obviously took for granted—is the foundational position of friendship (*amicitia*) in elite Roman society. For a Roman, an ethical theory that failed to treat *amicitia* as basic to public and private life would make no sense. Cicero can assume that his readers will relate the *utile* of friendship to the instrumental role of justice in promoting mutual interests.

Glory now enters the discussion, as a tailpiece to the universal need for friends. Cicero presents it as a subordinate value, not essential or useful per se, as friends are, but instrumentally useful in two ways. First, it is helpful as a means of acquiring friends; secondly, it is enormously helpful (*adiuvat plurimum*) in conducting affairs of state (2.31).

Cicero does not explain these instrumental advantages of glory. He had no need to do so. Given the class structure of Roman society (which he accepts at face value), it was self-evident that glory helped to get a man the friends and supporters he needed as the basis for a career in politics. What we should focus on in Cicero's account is his treating glory neither as the objective of a public man's career (*res maiores administrandae*), nor as an incentive to such activity. The relevance of glory is the great help it gives to the politician in doing his job.

Cicero states this as the obvious fact that it was in Roman life. However, the glory that he has in view is not a great reputation as such, but what he calls 'highest and perfected glory' (*summa . . . et perfecta gloria*). Here (2.31), for the first time in *Off.*, he implicitly distinguishes a normative concept of glory, as so described, from the glory pursuit of which conflicts with *honestum* in book 1. 'Highest and perfected glory', he claims, is a composite of three conditions—the affection, confidence, and admiration of the populace. What secures all three of these is justice (2.38).

Cicero in earlier works, and other contemporary writers, had distinguished between popular and *vera gloria*.[24] This passage is different — an attempt to argue that justice is the precondition for gaining lasting glory in the eyes of the masses. Although Cicero's thesis invokes a normative concept of glory, he does not advance it as a mere ideal. The elder Tiberius Gracchus, in contrast with his revolutionary sons, is offered as evidence that glory is only solid and lasting when, as a matter of fact, it is founded on justice (*Off.* 2.43). The example is, of course, tendentious, since there were many who would have said that the younger Gracchi rather than their father met this condition. History, it is true, tends to confirm the cliché that it is impossible to deceive the masses all the time. However, Cicero's attempt to connect acceptable glory with justice and mass approval fails. The proof that he offers is sufficient, perhaps, to show that actual glory (or popular approval) requires a statesman to have a reputation for justice. It does nothing to show that such a reputation is connected with actual justice. The best that Cicero can offer is the piety that 'true glory' cannot be acquired by simulation of justice.

Although this argument is a failure, it casts an interesting light on Cicero's political hopes and reformist ideology. His attempt to link true glory based on justice to popular support is as clear an indication of his opposition to Caesar and other extremists as his attack on *cupiditas gloriae* in book 1. That point can be justified by comparing this section of *Off.* with what Cicero wrote in the first *Philippic*. There addressing Dolabella (and the absent Antony), both consuls, he echoes or anticipates *Off.* to the letter:

I believe that you men of distinction, ambitious for great things, have not set your hearts on money as some credulous persons suspect, nor on wealth gained by violence and power unendurable to the Roman people, but on the affection of the citizens and glory. But glory is praise for right actions and great service to the state (*est autem gloria laus recte factorum magnorumque in rem publicam meritorum*) . . . I would tell you, Dolabella, the reward for right actions if I did not see that you, above others, enjoyed it for a while. (*Phil.* 1.29)

And later in the speech, to the absent Antony:

Did you, after these great achievements for the safety of the state, regret your fortune, distinction, renown, and glory? Whence then that sudden change? . . . I fear that not

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[24] For Cicero, see below. For *vera gloria* in other writers cf. Sallust, *Jug.* 41, Livy 22.39.20, Pliny, *Paneg.* 55.8. The material is very fully discussed by Atkins 1989, 102–9.

recognizing the true road of glory, you think it glorious to have more power on your own than everyone and to be feared by the citizens.[25] If you think this, you totally mistake the path of glory. To be a citizen deserving well of the state, to be praised, courted, and loved is glorious. But to be feared and hated is ugly, detestable, weak, and perilous. (ibid. 33)

Here, in the first *Philippic*, the main lesson of *Off.* is publicly applied to Antony. Cicero's politics explain why he attempts the impossible task of grounding morally justified glory in popular sentiment. The *De officiis* is the appropriate philosophical accompaniment to the *Philippics*.

I now return to my earlier questions about the status he assigns to glory in book 2 and the consistency of his treatment there with book 1 and with Stoicism. In the course of his argument concerning 'highest and perfected glory' he claims that justice is to be cultivated both for its own sake and 'with a view to augmenting rank and glory' (*propter amplificationem honoris et gloriae*, 2.42). Taken at face value, the latter expression is a howler so far as Cicero's Stoic authorities are concerned. Nothing could be further from Stoicism than the thought that a virtue has instrumental value for the sake of securing something non-virtuous. What he should have said, if he were thinking as a strict Stoic or Platonist, is that the just use of glory is something to be cultivated.[26] We may, of course, suppose that Cicero has slipped away from Stoicism at this point into traditional ideology,[27] or that he is doing what even Chrysippus allowed the Stoic sage to do—to speak rhetorically and politicize as if reputation (*doxa*) and other 'preferred indifferents' were something good (*SVF* 3.698). Neither of these suppositions is necessary. As I have already argued, Cicero does not approach glory in *Off.* book 2 as a necessary or per se value, but as something instrumental to securing friends and to engaging in public life. He treats glory not as a self-sufficient objective of the just man, but as something he should seek to acquire because of its utility to his role in the life of the community. Because the community benefits from the actions that justify the attribution of true glory, it is a value that combines advantage to the

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[25] This is Cicero's diagnosis of Caesar in *Off.* 2.23.

[26] For the Stoic concept of 'virtuously using life's natural advantages', see LS ch. 59. The Platonic background to this concept is discussed in Long 1988, 164–71. In his more idealized *De re publica* 1.27, Cicero makes Scipio speak as a strict Stoic, when Scipio claims that only someone who does not think of possessions as 'goods', only someone who 'knows how to use them', is the genuine owner of anything. Only such a man is one *qui imperia consulatusque nostros in necessariis, non in expetendis rebus, muneris fungendi gratia subeundos, non praemiorum aut gloriae causa adpetendos putet.*

[27] This seems to be Atkins's view (1989, 107).

individual with the general utility. Hence it cannot conflict with *honestum*. Like food or health or anything else that fits within a hierarchy of goals, glory needs to be sought after. But it should be sought after with a view to what it is 'useful' for.

That, I think, is what Cicero is trying to say in *Off.* book 2. Because his focus in that book is on the *utilia*, he sometimes speaks of them as if they were per se valuables. That will account for his giving justice the instrumental role of promoting glory. What he should have said, to avoid confusion, is that justice is both desirable for its own sake and as the only proper means of securing glory. That proposition would be fully in line with the instrumental role of the virtues in guiding 'proper functions' (*officia*) concerned with life's necessities and advantages.

In spite of its tensions, Cicero's analysis of glory in *Off.* shows him grappling with one of the toughest issues in Roman ethics and political ideology. His earlier writings show a comparable awareness of the need to rescue what was valuable in the traditional honour code from the pursuit of 'popular glory', which leads to national and personal ruin (*Tusc.* 3.3). However, he did not have much more to offer then than pious slogans, such as the mistake of treating those who gain glory as happy (*beati*), and those who are inglorious as 'thoroughly unhappy' (*Leg.* 1.32), or looking to the judgement of the few 'good men', to correct the mistaken assessments of the masses (*Tusc.* 3.3–4), or saying (*Tusc.* 1.109): 'Although glory has no intrinsic reason for being pursued, it nonetheless follows virtue as its shadow.' His position in *Off.*, that popular opinion cannot be elided from any analysis of glory, is at least firmly in touch with the ideology he wants to reform.

As for the orthodox Stoic position, I think it has strongly influenced Cicero's approach. In the *De finibus* (3.57) he himself is our source for the Stoics' threefold classification of 'preferred things': those that are per se (e.g. physical appearance), those that are instrumental (e.g. money), and those that combine both conditions (e.g. health). What his Stoic spokesman Cato chooses to call 'good renown' (*bona fama*, translating Greek *eudoxia*) rather than glory was ranked by Chrysippus and Diogenes (of Babylon) in the instrumental category. 'Independently of utility,' they said, 'it was not worth stretching out a finger for.'[28] Cicero's Cato expresses his vehement agreement

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[28] For the Stoics, of course, *to kalon* is 'a good worthy of praise' and confers praise on those who have it (*SVF* 3.83), and *aretē* is *epaineton*. At some date Stoics distinguished between *kleos*, renown that justly accrues to good men, and *doxa*, the repute attaching to inferior persons (*SVF* 3.161).

with this proposition. He then reports that unnamed Stoics after Carneades (Antipater seems the most likely candidate), who could not sustain this position, upgraded *eudoxia* to the status of 'something intrinsically preferred' (*per se praepositum*): 'It was the part of a refined and well educated man to want to be well spoken of . . . and so *eudoxia* has intrinsic rather than instrumental value.'

Cicero was writing for Romans who shared this sentiment, as he obviously shared it himself. Nonetheless, he did not, so far as I can see, propose in *Off.* that he and his readers have the unconditional *officium* to seek glory. He gives copious advice about the *officia* someone should perform who wants to gain 'true glory' (2.43), but his explicit view about its ranking in 'life's advantages' seems to me to be the instrumental one of Chrysippus and Diogenes.

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY IN *DE OFFICIIS*

Cicero's attempt to turn glory into a cooperative value, grounded in justice, is symptomatic of his politics in *Off.* The same holds good for his recommend-ations about property and the acquisition of wealth. In the final section of this chapter I want to expose some of his thoughts about property-ownership and their bearing on a mutually just relationship between the individual and the community. As before, I am particularly interested in the reference of his remarks to the politics he would like to see operative in Rome. I shall also try to indicate tensions that infect his attempts to harmonize individual and community interests. Those tensions are interesting not only as material for interpreting and criticizing Cicero's politics, but also because of their bearing on the conservative liberalism of which his thought is an intriguing precursor.

One way of reading *Off.* is to see it as starting from the point where *De finibus* book 3 ends. Cicero encourages that interpretation by making this observation at the beginning of *Off.* book 1: 'Those *officia* that are identified by traditional precepts are pertinent to the *summum bonum*; but that is not very obvious because they seem to be more concerned with the organization of community life' (1.7).[29] Society is the final topic treated in *De finibus* book 3, where it is discussed very perfunctorily (62–71). In *Off.* Cicero makes it his virtual starting-point. There (1.12; cf. 1.158–9) he repeats the Stoic account

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[29] The point of this obscure sentence is to advertise the fact that *Off.* is not primarily a work of moral theory, like *De finibus*, but an application of moral theory to *institutionem vitae communis*. We shall not go far wrong if we take Cicero to be making a distinction between ethics and politics.

of the natural bonding between human beings that he had outlined in the earlier work. His main theoretical point is that 'communicative action' (the text justifies this allusion to Habermas) is the natural manifestation of human rationality. Justice enters *Off.* as the natural and rational way for individual human beings to organize their lives in ways that are socially beneficial. 'Human society and union' (*societas hominum coniunctioque*)—a standard phrase in the work—is the supreme *utile*, in the language of *Off.*, because it comprehends the particular interests of every individual.

Cicero construes society normatively as the aggregate of individual interests (*communis utilitas* or *utilitas omnium*). He had Stoic precedents here of course, especially Antipater (cf. *Off.* 3.52 and below), but much of his treatment of justice follows a pattern which, whether Stoically inspired or not, is admirably suited to his brief as a hard-headed Roman lawyer and conservative opponent of what we would call left-wing politics.[30]

Chrysippus, whom he cites on the point, had defended the propriety of economic competition and property-ownership, so long as these infringe no principles of justice (*Off.* 3.42). Would he, however, have agreed with Cicero that the prime *officium* of a statesman is 'to see that each individual retains what is his own and suffers no diminution of his private goods at the hands of the state' (*Off.* 2.73)? The context of this remark is the Roman world of *Off.* book 2 and not the introductory remarks about justice from book 1. Yet even there Cicero begins his detailed treatment of justice by distinguishing between communal and private property (*Off.* 1.21). His first instance of doing injury or violating the *ius humanae societatis* is an offence against private property, which he clarifies by specifying conditions for its legitimate ownership (length of occupancy, conquest, legal transaction, treaty, purchase, or lot).[31] He starts his detailed discussion in book 3 similarly, by observing (21) that an offence against property is more 'contrary to nature than death,

[30] The extent of Cicero's originality, in his treatment of justice, is difficult to assess owing to the paucity of independently attested Stoic sources. I am largely persuaded by Atkins 1989, 1990, that Cicero has given his own thrust to his repeated claim, as she puts it well, that 'justice is to be delineated by its role in preserving society'. What I chiefly miss in her excellent study is a treatment of Cicero's dominant interest in private property. My own remarks, for reasons of space as well as focus, will concentrate on this point. Readers who are interested in aspects of justice that I omit should consult her work. See also Gabba 1979, 122–4, on Cicero's identification of *utilitas rei publicae* and *utilitas communis*, and Wood 1988, 124 ff.

[31] On the passage, cf. Watson 1968, 70–2. Pohlenz 1934, 25, thinks Panaetius lies behind Cicero's defence of private property here, but that does not follow from *Rep.* 1.39, the evidence he cites. All that is said in that passage (where Panaetius is not named) is that a *res publica* is the property of its people.

poverty, pain, or anything else that can affect our body or external things. For it destroys, at the outset, human society . . . which is maximally in accordance with nature.' Nowhere in *Off.* does Cicero suggest that it is the business of justice to consider whether the distribution of private property in a community is fair or conducive to the general interests. On the contrary, he fulminates against agrarian laws and public remission of debts—policies which were designed, of course, to improve the economic well-being of the community at large (cf. *Off.* 2. 78, 84). Nothing could be more pestilential, he says, than a speech by the tribune Philippus which proposed a redistribution of goods, on the ground that the state had no more than 2,000 property-owners (2.73). Cicero explains his opposition in the following statement: 'Governments were primarily instituted with a view to the preservation of private property. For although it was under nature's guidance that men clustered together, they sought the protection of cities with the hope of protecting their property.'[32]

In one of the most hyperbolical passages of *Off.* he contrasts his own opposition, as consul, to the remission of debts with the opposite behaviour of Caesar (*Off.* 2.84; compare also his attack on the property redistributions made by Sulla and Caesar, 1.43). Cicero concedes that governments should do everything possible to minimize the conditions which cause debts, but he insists that no circumstances can justify transfer of resources from the wealthy to those in debt. For similar reasons, he opposes property taxes. 'Nothing supports a government more strongly than its financial integrity, and that is worthless unless the payment of debts is enforced by law' (*Off.* 2.84).

I have dwelt on Cicero's strict interpretation of property rights for two reasons. First, it casts light on his opposition to all radical politicians, including the Gracchi brothers as well as Caesar and current adventurers. On Cicero's interpretation of justice, any intervention by government in the sphere of private ownership, whether by taxation or appropriation, is as flagrantly wrong as an individual's theft of another individual's property. Radical conservatives of today would have his support. Cicero thinks that wealthy individuals have the *officium* both to assist those who are indigent and to spend money for the

[32] For comments on Cicero's emphasis on property rights, cf. Wood 1988, 130–2, and de Ste Croix 1981, 426: 'No surviving Greek writer is quite as explicit about the overriding importance of property rights as Cicero, the earliest known to me in a long line of thinkers, extending into modern times, who have seen the protection of private property rights as the prime function of the state.' For Cicero's obsession with this theme prior to *Off.*, see esp. *De lege agraria*.

benefit of the state. He does nothing to suggest that government itself has an *officium* to engage in social welfare.

There is a second reason for taking a close look at his financial policies—the question of how they relate to his proof that it is incumbent on anyone to identify his individual interest with that of the whole community (*Off.* 3.26; 3.52). This proposition may look, on the surface, to be altruistic, a recommendation to define one's own interest by criteria that apply impartially to anyone else. But Cicero's application of the proposition is legalistic.[33] The communal interest in this context turns out to be the universal applicability of strict property rights. Cicero uses the theoretical principle about the common interest as a basis for rejecting the thought that it is wrong to steal from one's family, but all right to steal from other members of the community.

The principle of identifying individual and communal interests might, of course, be applied in numerous other ways. As a general principle, it could be used, independently of explicit exclusions on the scope of communal *utile*, to argue that I am entitled to no larger a share of the available interest than anyone else in the community, whether interest is identified by—for example—property, social privilege, or freedom. On such a utilitarian reading, it could be interpreted as justifying precisely the kind of redistribution or egalitarianism that Cicero deprecates so strongly. In a society as stratified and unevenly endowed as the Rome of his day, the material and non-material interests of individuals could only be made loosely commensurate with one another by radical reform. The interesting thing, then, is Cicero's highly restrictive application of communal utility. In his characteristic use of this expression, it refers to the interest that anyone shares in the right of all to retain what they happen to own. That principle, he insists, is the foundation of civil society, and it should never be abrogated for the sake of relieving any individual's disadvantages. The principle could be

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[33] For excellent remarks on the distinction between and the conflation of moral duty and legal obligation, as these pertain to passages in *Off.*, especially 3.50–7, see Annas 1989. I agree with her that Cicero seems to be guilty of the conflation in his adjudication of the dispute (*ad loc.*) between Diogenes and Antipater. I also agree with her analysis of the division of justice (or, better, the virtue that deals with the preservation of human society, *Off.* 1.20) into 'the two parts, justice and benevolence', where she writes (p. 168): 'I think it can be shown that justice proper is concerned with what we could call matters of legal obligation and rights, while benevolence is concerned with moral duties which we have towards others as fellow human beings.' What I have called above Cicero's 'legalistic' application of the principle concerning individual and community interests may then be seen as falling under the concept of justice as distinct from that of benevolence.

waived only in the case that a transfer of property would facilitate the survival of someone who could do great service to the state and human society (*Off.* 3.29–30).

Why did Cicero apply the principle of communal utility so restrictively? The question seems pertinent if we attend only to the premise he invokes in its support, which he drew from the Stoic Antipater (cf. *Off.* 3.52): 'Nature requires one human being to want to consider the interests of another, whoever one is, simply because one is a human being' (*Off.* 3.27). Why, in other words, does Cicero derive only a negative prohibition from this premise—not stealing from one's neighbour—and not, in addition, a positive recommendation of activity to maintain a fair balance of interest between one human being and another? The answers which suggest themselves combine philosophical assumptions of *Off.* with Roman realities.

Cicero's account of justice, as we have seen, is driven by two principal considerations—prevention of wrongdoing and regulating the usage of property (cf. *Off.* 1.20; 3.20–1). The association of these principles leads easily to the thought (confirmed by legal statutes) that wrongdoing is first and foremost an offence against property usage, and that, inasmuch as everyone owns something, anyone's rightful ownership is the paradigm of an interest common to all. A further consideration is the thesis (cf. n. 33 above) that it is strictly the function of benevolence, not justice, to lend assistance to others in proportion to their needs (*Off.* 1.49). Individual benevolence involves a voluntary disbursement of resources on another's behalf. For Cicero, the communal interest presupposes a willingness on behalf of the wealthy to go beyond what strict justice requires of them in looking to another's interests (compare his approval of the donations made by early Roman patricians, *Rep.* 2.26, 33, 38, 59). Even here, however, his fixation on retaining private property is evident: 'Human society and union will be best preserved' if family is the primary object of benevolence (*Off.* 1.50).

Cicero either did not see, or did not wish to see, the possible democratic and egalitarian applications of communal utility. The use that he makes of this Stoic concept is sufficient, nonetheless, to show that his politics in *Off.* has more than a nominal link with utilitarianism. From his use of communal utility, which was also Antipater's, we can see that this concept does not do away with self-interest in its everyday sense but justifies it on the condition that it is coextensive with the interest of all. That condition is what reconciles *utile*, the unavoidable object of individual human endeavour (*Off.* 3.101), with the social goods specified by justice.

I have already proposed that Cicero's reform of glory is premised upon this kind of utilitarianism. Albert Hirschman has argued that self-interest became the favourite candidate for human motivation in the eighteenth century from discontent with the aristocratic ideal of glory.[34] Although it was also prompted by other factors, such as dissatisfaction with the self-abnegation of Christianity, 'the postulate of universal self-interest . . . first rose to cultural prominence because of its unmistakably egalitarian and democratic implications'.[35] This brief digression into modern times helps us to identify strands in Cicero's Stoic inheritance which could have led to more radical views about the relationship between citizen and state than those he chose to develop. Even so, his use of philosophy in *Off.* helps us to see that the Stoicism of his time was capable of making a practical, as well as a theoretical, contribution to political ideology. Our human identity as a 'part' of the world or body politic (the standard Stoic concept; cf. *Fin.* 3.64) does not imply that we should give up genuinely private interests. The legitimate pursuit of private interests qua private interests is implied by our partnership in the community.

Two centuries after Cicero, the Stoic Hierocles was arguing that it is only 'good calculation' (*eulogistos*) for persons to identify their own interests with those of their country (Stobaeus 3.39.35, p. 732 Hense). One is a part of one's country in the same way that a finger is a part of a hand. If, as one finger, so to speak, you choose it in preference to the other four, you destroy the hand of which you are a part. Since your survival as one finger requires the survival of the whole hand, you have every reason to prefer the whole hand. Favouring one finger at the expense of the rest is self-destructive. Cicero uses a similarly organic model of the individual's relationship to the community (*Off.* 3.22); however, his context is not the vague patriotism of Hierocles but a homily on the fundamental tie between society's preservation, justice, and respect for property rights. Cicero also insists, unlike Hierocles, that nature (or reason) sanctions individual self-interest as a proper motivation just as long as my preference for myself is not a threat to the resources of others.

Human solidarity in *Off.*, for all the rhetoric with which Cicero invests it, proves to consist primarily in respecting strict justice about property rights and business transactions. The trust (*fides*) that this involves is the bonding society primarily needs for the mutual benefit of its members. Their individual *utile* is a necessary feature of any rational value system, compatible with, but not reducible to, the 'morally good' (*honestum*). Making that point

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[34] Hirschman 1977, 36.   [35] Holmes 1990, 268.

was a major contribution to political thought.[36] Cicero was able to do so because the recent Stoics Panaetius and Hecaton, as I suppose, had dropped the unhelpful doctrine that nothing is useful to anyone who is not a sage (cf. Chrysippus in *SVF* 3.674). But even the sage, at least Hecaton's sage, has become a careful and strongly motivated property-owner on the evidence of *Off.* 3.63: 'It is a wise man's function, while doing nothing contrary to conventions, laws, and institutions, to take care of his estate. For we want to be wealthy not only for ourselves, but also for our children, relatives, and friends, and above all, for our country. For the wealth and resources of individuals are the wealth of the state.' These sentiments of Hecaton's are implied, I think, by Cicero's initial comments in *Off.* 1.22 concerning communal interests: nature guides us, he says, to contribute to these by an exchange of *officia*, that is, by giving and receiving, binding human society together by our skills, our work, and our resources.

These thoughts have their basis in Stoicism, no doubt, but it is a secularized Stoicism, which has dropped the edifying but unhelpful talk about a divine city shared by gods and human beings. (No one in antiquity, I presume, could conceptualize the gods as property-owners.) Economic exchange properly regulated by law, encouragement to build up wealth, protection of legitimate private ownership, private rather than governmental philanthropy, non-intervention by government in the private sector—these features of Cicero's politics (by no means novel in *Off.*) show that, although he knew nothing of capitalism as an economic system for society at large, his ideology has unmistakably capitalist connotations. A speech-writer for a radical conservative of today could not do better than this Ciceronian peroration, with some amendment to its imperialistic closure:

Government officials will refrain from that form of dispensation whereby some are robbed in order that others may be given. They will make it their first concern to see that the equity of justice and the courts enables each to retain his own property, that the poor are not impeded by their poverty and that the rich are not harmed by envy in keeping or recovering what belongs to them, and that they use every means they can, in war or at home, to augment the state in power, land, and revenue. (*Off.* 2.85)

It is not necessary to sympathize with Cicero's politics in order to acknowledge the intellectual achievement of *De officiis*. His unceasing focus

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[36] For a defence of Cicero's significance as a political thinker, on this point and on others, cf. Wood 1988, 11–12.

on property rights as the foundation of civil society can be criticized, as also can his actual politics, for insensitivity to equity in other spheres, but he was clearly right to emphasize their foundational position. Although social solidarity, as he should have seen more clearly, is threatened by unfair distribution, a structure which permits a powerful few to extort, confiscate, and redistribute, for their own advantage, has forfeited all trust from the majority of citizens. Cicero plainly thought that this was the case at the time he was writing *De officiis*.

Lust for wealth ranks almost equal in his diagnosis of the Republic's ruin with lust for glory. He sees both of these, or their combination, as the primary threats to justice. Stoicism gave him the concepts to ground *officia* in precepts systematically deduced from a theory about the excellences natural to civic life. Cicero then applied that theory to his contemporaries and himself. The result was a work which uses Greek philosophy for purposes that are probably unique in their complexity and urgency—a combination of political and ethical theory, paternalism, self-apologia, advice to statesmen, reform of ideology, conservative propaganda, and patriotism. The *De officiis*, not the *De re publica*, is Cicero's Republic.

POSTSCRIPT

Shortly after the first appearance of this study Andrew Dyck published his commentary on Cicero, *De Officiis* (Dyck 1996) and kindly presented me with a copy of his great work, magnificently printed by the University of Michigan Press. In his introduction, Dyck (pp. 29–36) discusses 'politics in *de Officiis*'. With generous reference to my essay, he finds himself 'in substantial agreement' with its approach (p. 29 n. 62). An exception to this agreement concerns my suggestion concerning July 44 BC as the date when Cicero began to think of composing *Off*. I omitted to mention Cicero's elaborate farewell to his son (3.1.121), resident in Athens, in which he represents the work as a conversation substituting for the visit the father had had to break off, for political reasons (*Att.* 16.7.1, dated to 19 August). If I unduly play down young Cicero as the work's addressee, Dyck (pp. 10–16) makes up for my omission. Yet, as he observes, *Off.*, while addressed to Cicero's son, was 'also clearly meant for public circulation' (p. 16). I am inclined to reverse the

emphasis of that sentence by saying that the work, while clearly meant for public circulation, was also addressed to Cicero's son.

For a fine study of the debate Cicero stages between the Stoics Diogenes and Antipater, which casts doubt on the distinction I endorse between legality and morality (n. 33 above), see Schofield 1999*b*.

16

Stoic philosophers on persons, property-ownership, and community

I

The usage and connotations of the term person in reference to human individuals have a complex history. In classical Latin, *persona* is sometimes used in exactly the way we speak today of a 'certain person or persons',[1] but what underlies this usage is the term's seemingly original allusion to mask, role, or part.[2] *Persona* is not primarily what a human being is, but rather a role or status a human being has or maintains or undertakes or bears or assumes; hence the word is most frequently found as the direct object of such verbs as *sustinere*, *agere*, *capere* and *deponere*, *tenere*, *assumere*, and the like. Current in classical Latin too, probably, though not documented before the jurists of the late Roman empire, is the special usage of *persona* to signify the status or role some human being has as a legal right—especially freedom and citizenship. Notoriously, slaves according to Roman law are distinguished from free

[1] To judge from dictionaries, such uses of *persona* are relatively late: e.g. Suetonius, *certis personis et aetatibus* (*Caes.* 43); *minoribus quoque et personis et rebus* (*Tib.* 32).

[2] Cf. Boethius, *Ctr. Eutychen* 3, *nomen . . . personae videtur . . . traductum ex his scilicet personis quae in comoediis tragoediisque eos quorum interest homines repraesentabant.*

citizens by their lack of *persona* in this sense: slaves are 'things' (*res*)—items of property—and not legal 'persons' with rights to property-ownership.[3]

Neither Latin *persona* nor its Greek equivalent *prosōpon* is invested in the pre-Christian era with other connotations of 'person' that have become familiar since at least the seventeenth century; I mean the usage of person to distinguish human beings, individually or collectively, from other animals (and perhaps also from human bodily features), whether by virtue of reason, reflection, and (self-)consciousness (as in Locke or Leibniz), or as being ends in themselves (as in Kant), or as in some modern accounts, such as those of Frankfurt (1971) and Dennett (1976), which take person to be essentially a normative concept.[4] The term person, in its modern usage, may of course include the original Roman associations of the word (role-playing or status, and legally assigned rights and obligations), but when philosophers discuss personhood today they are primarily concerned either with the conditions of an individual human identity through time, or the attribution to an individual human being of psychological, social, and ethical properties that are foreign to *persona* in classical Latin. When Boethius in the early fifth century AD characterizes *persona*, in a Christian context, as 'the individual substance of a rational nature', *naturae rationabilis individua substantia* (*Contra Eutychen* 3), he departs from this Latin usage and goes some way towards anticipating the word's later development.

My topic in this study is contributions the later Stoics made to the early modern concept of person—person as a psychological, social, and ethical concept. Although Panaetius (or Cicero on his behalf) used the word *persona* in ways that have some bearing on this concept (compare the well-known passage on the four *personae* in *De officiis* 1.107–17), and the same holds good for Epictetus' usage of *prosōpon*, I do not think either they or other Stoics had a direct influence on the linguistic development of these particular terms.

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[3] Cf. Justinian, *Inst.* I.2–3.1, *Omne autem ius, quo utimur, vel ad personas pertinet vel ad res vel ad actiones . . . summa itaque divisio de iure personarum haec est, quod omnes homines aut liberi sunt aut servi*, and see the references given by Moyle 1912, 85–6.

[4] For a useful survey, see Danto 1967, to which should be added Locke's famous definition in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (5th edn., 1705), II. xxvii: the term person 'belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of a law, and happiness and misery'. Later Peripatetics are the only ancient philosophers, so far as I know, who said that *human being* as such is 'per se choiceworthy' (Stobaeus, 2.122, 11 Wachsmuth), which should be compared with Kant's famous maxim : 'Always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end', trans. Beck 1949 = 4: 429/96 of the Akademie edition of Kant. For a study including Stoicism, which goes well beyond the limits of this chapter, see Gill 1991.

What they did, rather, was to elaborate a range of ideas that have the effect of making 'human being' (*anthrōpos*) a word with normative meaning—one anticipating many of the later connotations of person.

I can make this point in a preliminary way by a selection of citations from Epictetus.[5] One of his favourite practices is to provoke his audience into reflecting on who or what they are. 'Do you know', he asks, 'what the nature and concept of an *anthrōpos* is?'; and he answers his own question by claiming that one who lacks self-knowledge, rational understanding, and moral judgement is nobody (2.24.11–20). What differentiates the human being from other animals, he says, is 'self-consciousness in relation to what one is doing', and also being a member of a community, together with moral integrity and intelligence (I.28.19–21). Or again, to be an *anthrōpos* is to have a profession (*epangelia*)—that of being a rational and social animal (2.9.1). You are not being an *anthrōpos* if you are detached from a community (2.5.26). This is a favourite theme too in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius.[6]

The normative usage of *anthrōpos* is ubiquitous in Epictetus. From Socrates onward, of course, Greek philosophers have treated *anthrōpos* as both a descriptive and an evaluative term. But Epictetus makes it virtually equivalent to our usage of person when we speak of what is incumbent on or due to another human being simply because he or she is human.

As my examples show, elements basic to Epictetus' normative usage of *anthrōpos* are second-order reflection, self-interrogation, and self-consciousness. Nearly seventy years ago the celebrated anthropologist Marcel Mauss, a nephew of Durkheim, in a lecture on the history of 'the notion of person', drew attention to what he called 'the voluntarist and personal ethics' of Stoicism.[7] Mauss acknowledged the influence of Roman law on the idea of a person as the bearer of rights and responsibilities, but he looked to the Stoics (albeit with scant documentation) as the source of the idea that conscience and self-consciousness (*conscius*, *conscientia*) are *the* attribute of the moral person, an idea which, he suggests, enriched the juridical conception of law.[8]

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[5] For further discussion, see Long 2002, 232–44.

[6] See 3.4, 3.6, 4.49, 5.1, 5.15, 7.22, 8.1, 8.7, 8.26.

[7] Mauss entitled the paper, which was first published in *the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 68 (1938), 'Une catégorie de l' esprit humain; la notion de personne, celle de moi.' In its posthumous English version, the paper is entitled 'A category of the human mind: the notion of person; the notion of self'. As such, it forms the basis (pp. 1–25) of Carrithers *et al.* 1985.

[8] Mauss gives no references, but his text (Carrithers *et al.* 1985, 18–19) shows that he was thinking primarily of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius.

An influence of Stoicism on Roman law is hardly news. It was the Stoics who first drew a clear distinction between a natural law, valid for all human beings, and state law—what the Roman jurists would call *ius gentium* as distinct from *ius civile*. The originality of Mauss's contribution was his pointing to Stoicism as the school of thought that pioneered self-consciousness as *the* attribute of a person, a person as a moral and legal entity. Mauss did not attempt to justify or elaborate this point, but his instincts were dead right, in my opinion. Today, when Stoicism is a major subject of research, we should be in a good position to test the force of his observation. The present chapter includes this as one of its objectives, but my chief purpose is to suggest a further tie between Stoicism and later conceptions of the person as a moral, psychological, and legal entity. That tie, I shall argue, has to do not only with consciousness or self-consciousness but also with the concept of property or ownership, a concept that the Stoics connected with self-consciousness and individual identity in a highly original way. My thesis is that the Stoics pioneered two key notions of liberal thought: first, that every human individual is the natural and rightful owner of at least one thing—himself or herself; second, that human nature inclines individual human beings to acquire private property and to interact with one another as property-owners. Stoic ideas about human beings as property-owners have striking affinities with seventeenth-century and Enlightenment thought on property and persons, especially ideas developed by Locke and Hegel. Affinity, of course, need not betoken influence. My purpose in referring to these later philosophers is to provide a standard of comparison for identifying and assessing the Stoics' seminal ideas.

II

In seventeenth-century and Enlightenment thought the concept of property includes not only material things external to the person, but also, as Locke put it:

T1: That Property which Men have in their Persons as well as Goods.[9]

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[9] *Second treatise*, sec.173 of J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, which I cite from Laslett 1988, 383. For a stimulating account of Locke's treatment of the natural right to property and individual appropriation, cf. MacPherson 1962, 194–221.

Hegel elaborates the link between personhood and property as follows:

T2: It is only through the development of his own body and mind, essentially through his self-consciousness's apprehension of itself as free, that man takes possession of himself and becomes his own property and no one else's.[10]

The social philosophies of Locke and Hegel are clearly rooted in their own times and distinctive preconceptions. But around two millennia earlier the Stoics had already begun to extend the everyday idea of property and property-ownership to that of human beings' relation to their individual selves. This extension of the standard concept of ownership also had important implications for the Stoics' conception of the autonomy of individual human beings, and of how such individuals should treat one another. That the Stoics could begin to think along these lines was largely due, I believe, to two huge differences between their political thought and traditional Greek ideology: first, the denial of natural slavery; and second, the denial of qualitative differences between human beings on the basis of race, class, or gender. These two points, momentous though we find them to be, are mentioned only cursorily in our fragmentary sources, but it is certain, I believe, that Stoic generalizations about *anthrōpoi* or *homines* are intended to cover all human beings regardless of gender, social position, or race.[11] Thus Stoicism played a fundamental part in generating an idea of persons—that is, human beings to whom common attributes of morality, responsibility, interest, and justice apply simply because they are all human.

As a general principle of Stoicism, this point scarcely needs extensive analysis. The novelty of my argument will be its focus on how Stoic philosophers connect the concept of property-ownership with being a person, or, as they would say, with being properly human, and with being a member of the human community. In Rome, as we have seen, slaves were legally defined as

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[10] *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 57, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1967). For an excellent account of Hegel's argument that property is something which it is important for every individual to have, see Waldren 1988, who writes (p. 356): 'Hegel's thesis is that by appropriating, owning, and controlling objects, a person can establish his will as an objective feature of the world.'

[11] For women having the same nature and virtue as men, cf. *SVF* 3.254. Although the author of this passage is Clement of Alexandria, his assertion is confirmed as Stoic and elaborated by Musonius Rufus (Stobaeus 2.244–7), whose discourses date from the 1st century AD; cf. also Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 3.25 (*SVF* 3.253) on Stoics' saying that women and slaves should philosophize, where Lactantius' context is his own resistance to gender- and status-discrimination. For further discussion of Stoic views on slavery, see Griffin 1976, 459–60 and Manning 1986.

property, and they were not entitled to own property. Slaves were strictly non-persons; they did not own themselves. The Stoics, I shall propose, canvassed the radical idea that everyone has at least one inalienable possession—the essence of the individual self, as defined by each human being's autonomy or capacity to give or withhold assent (the mental faculty they called *synkata-thesis*, and which Cicero translated by *assensio*).[12] Thus they undermined any justification for slavery on the basis of a human being's nature: what is essentially yours or mine can never belong to anyone else. Other Greek philosophers did not conceptualize the self by reference to the mental faculty of assent. Nor did they conceive of individuals as being reflexively related to themselves as owners. Speaking broadly, other Greek philosophers were equivocal about the desirability of private property.

III

When Stoicism got under way, around 300 BC, you could distinguish the other philosophical options in terms of their positions on property-ownership. Plato, in the *Republic*, had recommended a communal lifestyle for the guardian class, who are to own only a minimum of personal property. Private ownership and money are the mark of the artisans, who are second-class citizens with no stake in government. Nothing could be further from Plato's thought in the *Republic* than the idea that private property dignifies a human being's status or gives an entitlement to full participation in the community. His proposal in the *Laws* is rather different. There everyone—that is, every free-born male householder—is to be given an equal distribution of land, 'as far as possible'. Yet communal ownership remains the ideal. There is to be no private possession of gold or silver; no dowries are to be given; no money is to be lent at interest (*Laws* 5.739–45). The economic life of the state is to be geared to ensuring stability and to minimizing competition between citizens.

For Aristotle, the full citizen, who must be male, will be a householder. He needs a limited amount of property as a means to living well, but he will acquire his resources from agriculture (which is natural) rather than from 'unnatural' commerce or moneymaking (*Pol.* 1.8–9).[13] Aristotle, to be sure,

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[12] Cf. Cicero, *Acad.* 2.37, *nunc de adsensione adque adprobatione, quam Graeci* συγκατάθεσιν *vocant, pauca dicemus*. For discussion of Epictetus' conceptualization of the self in these terms, cf. Long 1991.

[13] For a good treatment of Aristotle's 'aristocratic' distrust of commerce, and his difference from Locke in this respect, cf. Shulsky 1991. Later Peripatetic ethics (probably under the influence of

strenuously defends private property-ownership against Plato's communism, and he anticipates the Stoics when he argues (in *Pol.* 2.5, 1263b1–4) that: 'Every individual loves himself and this is surely natural . . . practically everyone likes to have their piece of property.' But this is an offhand remark, making an objection to Plato rather than advancing substantive theory. Aristotle rejects economics as the fundamental rationale for the state; the purpose of the state is to promote a life that is 'good', and that involves much more than a pact of mutual protection or an agreement on the exchange of goods and services. Property-ownership is only instrumentally valuable, as a means to living the good life and for exercising such virtues as benevolence and magnificence.

Aristotle's complacency about property ties in with his defence of natural slavery, his conception of natural slaves as animate tools rather than full-fledged human beings, and his view of women as defective human beings in comparison with males. Given such views, there is no room in his political thought for a conception of some kind of ownership as a *common human attribute or right*.

The Epicureans have little to say about property-ownership directly.[14] In line with their apolitical ethics, they seem to assume that nature can provide the minimum sustenance and shelter necessary for living in tranquillity or, more realistically, that friends will minister to one another's needs, as Epicurus himself did by providing resources to followers from his own estate. Epicureanism presupposes the existence of a particular political community which will provide sufficient mutual protection to enable Epicureans to get on with their quiet life without being molested.[15] For the purpose of countering desires that can lead to frustration, Epicurus recommended his followers to take minimal interest in possessions. Somewhat similarly, but still more radically, the Cynics, under the inspiration of Diogenes of Sinope, adopted a mendicant lifestyle to indicate their contempt for organized society. In owning nothing material to speak of, the Cynic presents himself as an inverted monarch, whose power consists precisely in renouncing conventional status and property.

These four philosophical options all assume that some persons will be property-owners. Far from seeing that as the fundamental rationale of society,

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Stoicism) has a cosmopolitanism that is foreign to Aristotle's outlook; cf. Cicero, *Fin.* 5.65 and Stobaeus 2.120, 17–121, 21.

[14] See, however, Philodemus, *On economics,* and the brief remarks on property-management in his work, *On choices and avoidances*, with the useful comments of Indelli and Tsouna-McKirahan 1995, 213–20.

[15] See Chapter 9 above.

they tend to minimize its significance even when, like Plato (in the *Laws*) and Aristotle, they acknowledge that citizens are necessarily or naturally householders. Property-ownership in their view is no more than a necessary instrument of community life. It carries no weight in determining the specific content of the good for *man*. Against such a background we would hardly expect property-ownership to be metaphorically extended to include individual human beings' relation to themselves, and thus to serve as the foundation for a theory about the common interests and rights of all human beings.

IV

In order to show that the Stoics, alone (or at least first) among Greek philosophers, took a significant step in this direction, I have to tread an intricate path, starting with the following text from Cicero's *De officiis* 2.73:

T3: Governments were primarily instituted with a view to the preservation of private property. For although it was under Nature's guidance that human beings clustered together, they sought the protection of cities with the hope of preserving their property.

The context of this passage is Cicero's postulate that the first duty of government is to see that each individual shall have what belongs to him and suffer no loss of property at the hands of the state. Cicero's thought here corresponds strikingly with that of Locke, who writes:

T4: The great and *chief end* therefore, of Mens [*sic*] uniting into Commonwealths, and putting themselves under Government, *is the Preservation of their Property*. To which in the state of Nature there are many things wanting.[16]

This correspondence is hardly coincidental, because Tully's *Offices* was one of Locke's favourite books.[17] Cicero's linkage of good government to protection of people's property is a constant theme in this work, as it is elsewhere in his writings.[18] But what has it to do with Stoicism?

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[16] Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, II. 124 cited from Laslett 1988. In this context Locke is explaining why Man is willing to give up the freedom he enjoys 'in the State of Nature' and 'subject himself to the Dominion' of a government. In the sentence preceding T4 he writes: 'And 'tis not without reason, that he seeks out, and is willing to joyn in Society with others who are already united, or have a mind to unite for the mutual *Preservation* of their Lives, Liberties and Estates, which I call by the general Name, *Property*.'

[17] See Mitsis 2003.   [18] See Chapter 15 above, pp. 326–32.

The first answer to this question is that Cicero's official source and model for *De officiis* is the work of the Stoic philosopher Panaetius, entitled 'On proper functions' (*Peri kathēkontōn*). Cicero has not slavishly copied Panaetius, that is clear; there is much in *De officiis* that derives from Cicero's Roman experience, subsequent to the death of Panaetius. However, early on in the work (1.31), where Cicero is laying the theoretical foundations for treating particular duties, he characterizes justice as follows:

T5: The first function of justice is to prevent one person from injuring another unless in retaliation for wrongdoing; and the next to ensure that public property is used on behalf of the public, and private property on behalf of its particular owner.

Here, at an early point in his argument which Panaetius most probably authorized, Cicero again emphasizes protection of private property, treating it as a central function of justice.

Towards the end of *De officiis* (3.63) Cicero cites another Stoic philosopher, Hecaton, the pupil of Panaetius:

T6: It is the function of a wise man, while doing nothing contrary to conventions, laws, and institutions, to be concerned about his private affairs. For we want to be wealthy not only for ourselves, but also for our children, relatives, friends, and above all, for our country. For the resources and supplies of individuals are the wealth of the state.

In this passage, concern for one's property is presented as a necessary attribute of the ideal human being, the Stoic sage, and therefore a necessary attribute of any human being; and that concern is connected with the economic well-being of the community at large. T6 combines self-interest with altruism in the wise man's motivations.

I shall pursue that theme further in due course. For now, I simply note that Cicero's focus upon private property and community has fully accredited Stoic backing; it is not his own invention. Indeed, before this passage (at *Off.* 3.51–5) he purports to report a fascinating debate between two heads of the Stoa, Antipater and Diogenes of Babylon, concerning the principle of *caveat emptor*, where the question at issue is whether a good person is or is not required to declare faults in an item that he is selling.[19]

We may take it as certain, then, that some Stoic philosophers at the time of Cicero took property-ownership and legal accumulation of property, in

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[19] This passage is very well discussed by Annas 1989.

the everyday sense, to be a function of a morally good person, a function, moreover, which gains part of its justification in what it contributes to the well-being of society. An affinity with Locke is again evident:

T7: He who appropriates land to himself by his labour, does not lessen, but increase the common stock of mankind.[20]

Still, Stoicism had been going for some 250 years by the time Cicero wrote about it. The philosophy had been assimilated at Rome, and perhaps influenced by Rome. In addition, Stoic philosophers were not a monolithic church. Can I show that the views just outlined are part of the mainstream Stoic tradition, and that they are grounded in Stoic theory about human nature, human relationships, justice, society, and natural law?

To respond to this question I begin by citing what may seem to be counter-evidence that is incontrovertible, from Epictetus. First (1.1.10):

T8*a*: [Zeus addressing Epictetus] Had it been possible, I should have made your little body and property (*ktēsidion*) free and unimpeded. But as it is . . . this is not your own, but only cunningly worked clay.

And second (4.1.82):

T8*b*: What is there for you to be afraid of? Of the things that are yours, where your property (*ousia*) of good and bad [is located]?[21] Who has power over these? Who can remove them or impede them? . . . Are you afraid, then, about your body and your [acquired] possessions (*ktēsis*)? About things that are not your own?

In these passages Epictetus seems to argue that material property should not be of any concern, on the grounds that neither it nor even one's body is 'one's own'. His main point in the context of T8*a* is that human beings are autonomous only in respect of their mind-set. In T8*b* he insists that you (the generic you) have only one inalienable possession, describing this as 'where your own property (*ousia*) of good and bad is located'. Here, Epictetus is teaching the strict Stoic doctrine that nothing is ultimately good or bad, nothing ultimately makes for happiness or unhappiness, except one's moral integrity or its opposite: happiness and unhappiness are not conditioned by one's material possessions or the state of one's body. This is not only the strict Stoic

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[20] *Two Treatises on Government*, passage added to II. 37 in the Christ's College copy.

[21] I translate *ousia* here by 'property', rather than 'true nature' (Oldfather in the Loeb edition, *ad loc.*). Cf. Epictetus 3.3.10, where *ousia* must be so translated, in reference to moral properties. In 4.1.82 Epictetus may be playing on both meanings, but the words that follow, concerning fear of theft, etc., make 'property' the preferable rendering.

doctrine; it is a doctrine which, we can be sure, no Stoic could abandon and remain true to his philosophy.[22] Does it not follow, then, that Stoic philosophy taught the utter indifference of owning and protecting property?

It does not follow, and that for two reasons. The first reason is that, though wealth, as an external commodity, has no *moral* value in Stoicism, it has *instrumental* value for 'living in agreement with nature', and should be preferred, *salva virtute*, to poverty.[23] The Stoic, then, is not a Cynic. Given the choice and given consistency with moral principles, Stoics prefer wealth and health to poverty and sickness, and they ground that choice in a premise about nature, which here refers to the teleology of human nature and its identification with rationality. Chrysippus, in a passage approving Hesiod's injunction to Perses 'to work', wrote:

T9: They are insane who make wealth, health, freedom from pain, soundness of body of no account and who do not cling to such things.[24]

In treating body and external property as 'not one's own', then, Epictetus is not denying them all positive *value*. Somewhat hyperbolically to be sure, he is saying that a human being's fundamental identity and well-being are grounded in her only inalienable possession—herself, her mind or moral purpose. He is not recommending us to be totally indifferent to health or wealth.

The second reason for rejecting the Stoics' total indifference to property or ownership in principle is that Epictetus actually relies on the concept of possession in order to make his point about what is ultimately *mine* or *yours*. Far from rejecting the concept in principle, he insists that we are all owners of one supremely valuable thing—our minds or moral purposes or autonomy. This is not, of course, property in the material sense of the word, but it is fundamental to the way Epictetus conceptualizes the self. As he sees it, all human beings are alike in their natural ownership of the one thing that makes each of them essentially human—an autonomous mind and power of moral choice or assent.[25]

What Epictetus calls self-ownership was the Stoics' most far-reaching contribution to their reflections on society, justice, and personal freedom. We

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[22] Cf. Kidd 1971.   [23] See *SVF* 3.126–30, and LS vol. 2, n. on 59M.
[24] Plutarch, *Stoic. rep*. 1047A. Chrysippus is presumably objecting to Cynics and Cynicizing Stoics like Aristo.
[25] Cf. 4.4.29: 'Only keep the general principles in mind: "What is mine? What is not mine? What has been given to me? What does God want me to do now? What does he not want me to do?"' The primacy of Epictetus' injunction, 'Distinguish what is and is not one's own', is shown by its dominant presence in *Encheiridion* 1, which is largely a reprise of *Discourse* 1.1. For discussion see Long 2002, ch. 8.

may also recall Hegel's observation about freedom and taking possession of oneself (T2). But I want to set self-ownership aside for now in order to follow up the Stoics' ideas concerning ownership of material property. My ultimate aim is to see how well their theory about property-ownership in this sense coheres with self-ownership, the autonomy of the person.

<div align="center">V</div>

Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was notorious for canvassing a utopian model of society, comparable in some respects to Plato's *Republic*. Only a few fragments of Zeno's work survive, and interpretation of them is controversial.[26] What appears certain is that Zeno envisioned a communistic society, where wives were held in common and currency was banned. This society was radically utopian, in that it consisted only of ideally virtuous persons; and its principal aim, like that of Plato's *Republic*, was the generation of complete concord or harmony between all. It was in his own *Republic* (DL 7.32) that Zeno canvassed the idea (cf. also DL 7.121, and T29) that freedom and slavery are primarily ways of marking not social but moral status, an idea he probably inherited from the Cynics.

Some ideas of Zeno's *Republic*, including this last one, resonate in later Stoicism. But the social theory developed by his successors moved in a radically cosmopolitan direction, as indicated in Cicero, *ND* 2.54:

T10: The universe is, as it were, the common home of gods and humans, or a city that belongs to both.

Cicero is here echoing ideas that go back at least as far as Chrysippus, the second founder of Stoicism. What is envisaged is clearly not a particular state or civic entity, but certainly not a Zenonian utopia either. The claim is rather that every rational being (i.e. all gods and humans), in the world as we find it, has a common stake in the universe: the universe is everyone's home or shared possession. Title to this shared ownership is granted by the shared attribute of rationality. How rationality, as a shared attribute, leads to community is explained by Cicero, drawing on Stoicism, in *De legibus* 1.23:

T11: Since nothing is better than reason, and this exists in both human beings and god, a human being's first association with god is in reason. But those who have reason in common also have right reason in common. Since that is law, we must also

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[26] For the evidence on Zeno's ideal polity and for Chrysippus' shift of focus to the cosmopolis, see Schofield 1991.

be reckoned to be associated with the gods in law. But further, those who have law in common have justice in common. But those who have these things in common must be held to belong to the same state.

The world city, then, is the common possession of all, inasmuch as law and justice are common to all. What law and justice signify here can be gathered from the beginning of Chrysippus' book *On law*:[27]

T12: The standard of right and wrong, prescribing to animals whose nature is political what they should do, and prohibiting them from what they should not do.

Chrysippus in this passage is clearly not referring to statute law, the laws of a particular community. The law that he puts forward as ruler over all things human and divine is natural law—rational principles of prescriptive behaviour which are taken to be valid for all human beings. Nonetheless, these texts assume that those to whom they apply will be living in civic communities. Indeed, Stoics defined city as:

T13: A group of human beings living in the same place and administered by law.[28]

The naturalness of civic life is emphasized by the Stoic Hierocles, writing, probably in the early second century AD, on the foundations of ethics:

T14: We should attend to the fact that we are an animal, but a gregarious one that needs another of the same species. For this reason, too, we inhabit cities; for no one is human who is not part of a city.[29]

The shared possession of the universe, the shared possession of reason and law, the shared possession of justice, the shared possession of a particular city—these are striking contributions to the concept of universal humanity. None of these possessions is a material thing, any more than one's ownership of oneself is; but, as we shall now see, Cicero brings all these ideas to bear upon questions that are directly related to possession in the everyday sense—the material interests of human individuals, taken quite generally and abstractly, and the relation of these particular interests to the communal interest of society.

In an argument whose logical form has distinctively Stoic features, he writes (*Off.* 3.26):

T15: This, then, should be everyone's project—to ensure that the individual and the community have the same interest. If each person seizes this interest for himself, all

[27] The text (= LS 67R) is cited by the Roman jurist, Marcian, *Inst.* 1.11.25.
[28] Dio Chrysostom 36.30 (LS 67J); cf. also Clem. Alex., *SVF* 3.327.
[29] *Elementa ethica* col. IX, with text and commentary by Bastianini and Long 1992.

human solidarity will be destroyed. Further: if nature prescribes that a human being should want to consider the interest of another human being, whoever he is, simply because he is a human being, it follows in accordance with the same nature that there is an interest which is common to all. But if so, we are all subject to one and the same law of nature; and if this too is so, we are certainly forbidden by nature's law from wronging another. But the first is true; therefore the last is true.[30]

Individuals and society have a common interest in the preservation of justice—that is to say in this context, the right of individuals to retain their own property without interference from others: 'Nature (i.e. reason) prescribes that a human being should want to consider the interest of another human being, whoever he is, simply because he is a human being.' I take it that three assumptions underlie this premise. First, the community of reason: if something is rational for me, it will also be rational for you; second, the rationality of self-interest: if it is rational for me to want to promote my own interests, reason constrains me to attribute the same line of thought to you; and third, the universality of interest in ownership: if I am interested in preserving my property (however property is construed), reason requires me to attribute the same interest to you. All human beings, then, have individual interests including interests in their own property. Cicero concludes that justice—scrupulous respect for another's interests—is an interest common to all, and therefore, since it is grounded in the community of rational human nature or natural law, it is binding on all.

The power of this argument is its generality and impartiality. Its weakness is its reticence about how interest is to be construed in specific, especially quantitative, terms. However, it is clear from other passages that the Stoics did not ground justice primarily in the reciprocity of self-interest. They viewed human sociability as an extension of the parental instinct. Thus Cicero, *De finibus* 3.63:

T16: From [*sc.* parental instincts] is derived the existence of mutual appropriation (*commendatio = oikeiōsis*) between human beings, and this is something natural, which has the consequence of obligating one human being not to find another human being alien, on account of the simple fact that the other is human ... [examples of social animals follow]. Human beings are united much more tightly. And so we are by nature fit for gatherings, groups, and civil societies.

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[30] The Stoic Antipater is almost certainly Cicero's inspiration here: cf. *Off.* 3.52, and Schofield 1995, 199–201.

It is our nature, according to this argument, to regard other persons, whoever they are, as akin to ourselves simply in virtue of the fact that we are all human. At a preliminary stage of his argument in *De officiis* (1.22), probably drawing on Panaetius, Cicero connects this idea of human solidarity with general human use of the earth's resources, and with economic cooperation:

T17: But since, as Plato has admirably expressed it, we are not born for ourselves alone but our country claims a share of us and our friends too,[31] and since, as the Stoics hold, all the products of the earth are created for human use; and since human beings are created for the sake of human beings, so as to be able mutually to help one another—in this we should follow nature as our guide, to contribute to the common interest by an exchange of functions, by giving and receiving, and so by our skills, work, and talents cement the community of human beings with one another.

If Cicero's conclusion is Stoic, as we may surely take it to be, we observe that school's divergence from the narrowly elitist view of civic excellence favoured by Aristotle.

But we have not yet established a conceptual link between ownership of material property and what the Stoics thought about natural or rational human motivations and the good life for society. Their ideas about the community of reason and law, and the application of these ideas to mutual interests and justice, are compatible, it could seem, with radical communism, minimal private property, and minimal commercial activity. Or, to put it still more strongly, if the world is the common possession of all, should it not follow that everyone should own everything or at least an equal share of everything? Cicero detested such egalitarianism, but maybe he was simply airing his Roman prejudices. I turn now, then, away from Cicero to evidence from Stoic philosophers themselves.

As we have already seen, the Stoic Hecaton (T6) treats a law-abiding interest in personal wealth as a wise man's function, treating that ideal as motivated by a combination of self-interest, concern for family and friends, and patriotism. We can build on this point by observing that the Stoic sage is characterized as not only the only householder worthy of that description, but also as the only authentic income-earner:

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[31] The reference is to Plato, *Ep*. 9, 358a. Cicero here (and at *Fin*. 2.45) omits Plato's mention of the share of ourselves that belongs to our parents. Is this his (or Stoics') deliberate attempt to broaden the scope of Plato's statement?

T18: They say that only the virtuous man is qualified in household management and a good manager and also moneymaker (*chrēmatistikos*).[32]

'Only authentic such and such' is the Stoics' characteristic way of distinguishing the ideal wise man from imperfect humanity. Aristotle had been squeamish about whether a good male citizen should engage in moneymaking as distinct from estate-management, out of fear for the taint of vulgarity (*banausia*), but the Stoics had no compunction about using the term *chrēmatistikos*, 'moneymaker', even in relation to their wise paragon, characterizing its normative practice thus:

T19: Moneymaking is knowing how to make money from the proper means and a disposition which generates consistency of action in the acquisition, safe-keeping, and spending of money for one's resources.[33]

Although they did not propose that the sage would make his income out of commerce, they did not require him to be a farmer or estate-manager either. Their readiness to discuss different sources of the sage's income could be an implicit criticism of conventional Greek class-consciousness.[34]

As for egalitarianism, the Stoics go out of their way to insist that private ownership and economic competition are quite compatible with their theses concerning both community of interest or justice, and concerning the world or the state as a shared possession. On both of these points we have a fascinating comment by Chrysippus:

T20: Just as, though the theatre is something communal, it is correct to say that the seat each person occupies is *his*, so in civil society or the world, while these are communal, no principle of justice opposes each person's owning what is his individual property.[35]

With his analogy between the world and a theatre, Chrysippus defends persons' right of occupancy to the seat they occupy or right of possession to what

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[32] Stobaeus 2.95, 9 (*SVF* 3.623).   [33] Ibid. 14 (*SVF* 3.623).

[34] See Stobaeus 2.109, 10 (*SVF* 3.686) where three sources of income are cited for the sage: (1) holding the office of king or being provided for by a king's funds; (2) political office or friends in high office; (3) lecturing (*sophisteuein*). This doctrine goes back to Chrysippus (DL 7.189).

[35] Waldren 1988, 154, attributes this passage only to Cicero, *Fin*. 3.67, without reference to Chrysippus or Stoics, while Erskine 1990, 105 ff., attributes it to Stoics subsequent to the time of Chrysippus, in spite of his being named by Cicero as his authority for the preceding context (cf. *SVF* 3.371). Epictetus, who is a further source for the theatre image (2.4.9), uses it to illustrate the compatibility of the principle that 'women are common [*sc*. property] by nature' with their apportionment to individual men in marriage.

they own. The passage is too compressed to be thoroughly clear. What it suggests, I think, is that items of property, like a theatre seat, can in principle be possessed by anyone (the communal point) but by no more than one person or set of persons (the legal occupier) at any one time. If this is correct, our shared possession of the world, according to the Stoics, is more like a right of access or opportunity than a title of personal ownership. Chrysippus in fact sees no problem about keen competition between persons in promoting their private interests, so long as they respect one another's rights to possess what they legitimately own:

T21: A runner in a competition should try with might and main to win, but he should do nothing to trip up his competitor or push him. So in life it is not unfair for each person to seek what is in his interests but he has no right to seize it from anyone else. (Cicero, *Off*. 3.42)

Stoics from the time of Chrysippus, as we have seen, studied the rights of all persons to own what they legally possess, the social utility of legally regulated competition and cooperation, and the common interest of everyone in principles of justice which are impartial and binding on every individual. I turn now, in conclusion, to consider their most original contribution to the concept of property or ownership. This will take us away, at least initially, from material property. What concerns me now is the concept the Stoics called *oikeiōsis*. This concept is the psychological foundation of their ethical theory and their theory of personal identity. Is it also the foundation of their approach to material property?

VI

The term *oikeiōsis* is derived from the root *oik*, which is most familiar from the words for a house or home, *oikos/oikia*.[36] Something is *oikeion* when it belongs to the house or to members of the house. The root meaning is 'belonging to', 'owning', 'having as one's own'. But more than mere ownership or possession is involved. *Oikeioi* include kin and friends, to whom we are bonded with ties of affection, as we may also be bonded affectionately to the things

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[36] The voluminous bibliography includes Pembroke 1971, Kerferd 1972, Striker 1983, Inwood 1984, Brunschwig 1986, Engberg-Pedersen 1990, Blundell 1990, and Reydams-Schils 2002. For a selection of texts with discussion, cf. LS ch. 57. Later Peripatetics took over the Stoic concept of *oikeiōsis* (see Stobaeus 2.118 ff.) and adapted it to their non-Stoic system of three kinds of 'goods', Stobaeus 2.122–3.

that we own. For convenience I will translate *oikeiōsis* by 'appropriation', but the forcible connotations of appropriation should be discounted. As the Stoics use *oikeiōsis*, the word primarily refers to a process or activity, innate in all animals, which explains why, from the moment of birth, they behave in self-regarding ways.

T22: Every animal is primarily appropriated to its own constitution [i.e. has *oikeiōsis* to itself] . . . This is instinctual in all animals. Nature cares for its own products, and because the safest protection is the closest, each product of nature has been entrusted to itself. (Seneca, *Ep*. 121.14)

T23: According to Chrysippus, in book 1 of his work *On ends*, the first thing appropriate to (*oikeion* to) every animal is its own constitution *and its consciousness of this* . . . In making every animal, Nature appropriates it to itself; for thus it repels injurious things and pursues things that are appropriate. (DL 7.85)

In T23 Chrysippus treats an animal's *oikeiōsis* to itself as the basis for its instinctual ability to live its own way of life and resist injury. As reported by Diogenes Laertius, Chrysippus proposed that *oikeiōsis* involves not only an animal's affinity for its constitution but also consciousness (*suneidēsis*) of its constitution. Actually, as we learn from the Stoic Hierocles, self-perception or self-consciousness is not an outcome of *oikeiōsis* but rather its foundation:

T24: As soon as an animal is born, it perceives itself. Next, then, it is clear that when an animal is affected by some representation of itself . . . Nature would be accused of acting in vain before birth unless, as soon as an animal is born, it will be pleased with itself. So no one, not even a lunatic, would say that at birth an animal is displeased with itself and the representation of itself. And it is certainly not in a state of indifference either; for 'not being pleased' is no less conducive to an animal's death and contempt for its nature than 'being displeased'. Hence this argument compels us to agree that an animal, having got its first perception of itself, is at once appropriated to itself and its own constitution.[37]

Hierocles adduces copious arguments to prove that every animal perceives itself from the moment of birth—that is, has some kind of consciousness of the kind of animal that it is. He then infers, as in T24, that it would be inconsistent with nature for an animal not to be pleased with the way it perceives itself. *Oikeiōsis* is the natural outcome of every animal's favourable

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[37] Hierocles, *Eth. el.* col. VI, 23–53, ed. Bastianini and Long 1992. The papyrus text of the excerpt I have translated requires virtually no conjectural supplementation. For detailed treatment of Hierocles' concept of self-perception, see Long 1993.

self-representation. Animals want to survive and live their particular mode of life because they love themselves as owners of themselves, and they love themselves because self-love is the natural response to the way they perceive themselves as self-owners.

By accounting for animal behaviour in this way the Stoics seek to explain the observable behaviour of animals, including human infants. They propose that every animal is not merely an individual centre of agency but a self—a being that feels itself to have an individual identity and loves itself as such. *Oikeiōsis* is their name for an individual animal's relation to itself, its sense of owning itself, belonging to itself, and caring for itself. *Oikeiōsis* motivates each animal to appropriate to itself those things in the world that it perceives as things that it wants to belong to itself, such as appropriate food and shelter. It is the instinct that enables an animal to feel at home in the world.

What a non-human animal's self can be like is an imponderable question. Having begun with a thesis about all animals, the Stoics focused upon the *oikeiōsis* of human beings. They acknowledged, as Seneca does in T25 (*Ep*. 121.16), that human beings pass through different phases in their lives from infancy to old age:

T25: At different stages of life each person has a different constitution, but the affection for one's constitution [i.e. *oikeiōsis*] is identical throughout. It is *me* that Nature commends to me, and not a boy to me, or a young man, or an older man.

Seneca looks to *oikeiōsis* as the glue of his persisting personal identity. Whatever his age, he is always 'me'; that is to say, he is always aware of himself as the primary object of concern and affection. According to this Stoic idea, the self is a relational and reflexive concept, my caring ownership of myself, and it is also a cognitive concept, since I cannot care for myself without being aware of who I am. Self-consciousness and self-love are what constitute me as me to me.

The constitutional changes to which Seneca in T25 alludes are crucial to the Stoics' account of a person's normative development. What a human infant seeks for itself is nurture pure and simple. That is its nature and manifestation of self-love. As intelligence and experience develop, human beings acquire interest in a range of different things, such as family and social life and exercising one's intelligence; these become natural objects of concern or appropriation, further manifestations of self-love.[38] As this happens, the

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[38] Cf. Cicero, *Fin*. 3.16–21.

theory goes, the self enlarges its identity so that its appropriations are no longer merely self-centred, but are also other-directed, and indeed the foundation of justice:

T26: The starting-point of all appropriation (*oikeiōsis*) and alienation is perception, and the followers of Zeno make appropriation the starting-point of justice. (Porphyry, *Abst.* 3.19 = *SVF* 1.197)

Here we may recall Cicero's comments about finding no human being alien, simply because the other is human. We may now supplement Cicero by adding that, in considering someone else's interests, one takes her to be like oneself as a self-conscious and self-concerned person. The Stoics evidently thought that self-appropriation flowers, or should flower, if nature's norms are fulfilled, into a caring appropriation of other persons—an appreciation of them as related to, and even belonging to, oneself.[39] Thus other persons would be seen as meriting something of the same concern that one shows to oneself.

In an excerpt from a work on 'How one should treat one's relatives', Hierocles provides a fascinating model for this normative appropriation of other persons.

T27: Each one of us is, as it were, entirely encompassed by many circles, some smaller, others larger, the latter enclosing the former on the basis of their different and unequal dispositions relative to each other. The first and closest circle is the one which a person has drawn as though around a centre, his own mind. This circle encloses the body and anything taken for the sake of the body; for it is a circle of virtually minimal radius, and almost touches the centre itself. Next, the second one further removed from the centre but enclosing the first circle; this one contains parents, siblings, wife and children ... The outermost and largest circle, which encompasses all the rest, is that of the whole human race ... It is the task of the well-tempered person, in his proper treatment of each group, to draw the circles together somehow towards the centre, and to keep zealously transferring those from the enclosing circles into the enclosed ones.[40]

Hierocles takes the mind or self to be, as it were, a point, and the body to be a circle very tightly drawn around that point as its centre. Then follows a series

[39] For discussion of the relation between self-regarding and other-regarding *oikeiōsis*, cf. Kerferd 1972; Inwood 1983, 193–99; Engberg-Pedersen 1990, 122–6; Blundell 1990; Schofield 1995.
[40] Hierocles, *ap.* Stobaeus 4.671, 7 = LS 57G. For discussion cf. Inwood 1984 and LS vol. I, p. 353. There are striking affinities between Hierocles' cosmopolitanism and that of later Peripatetics; see n. 13 above.

of concentric circles of ever-increasing radius. These comprise, in diminishing order of family and other relationships, the whole of humanity, starting from one's immediate family and concluding, in the outermost circle, with the human race as a whole. Hierocles attaches a series of prescriptions to his model—drawing the circles towards the centre, transferring groups of more distantly related persons into nearer circles, and (omitted from T27) changing the names of more distant to closer relatives. These prescriptions are intended to diminish the distance between the self and everyone else. The recommended policy is appropriating others to oneself, taking them to belong to one, and being concerned for them. Notably, nonetheless, the body and its needs are the closest to, though not identical with, the mind at the centre.

The Stoic concept of *oikeiōsis* trades heavily on ideas associated with property-ownership, for example, household, affinity, belonging, affection. Hierocles' model of desirable relationships with other people invokes these ideas, not the literal possession of other persons but a concern for them that is similar in kind, if not in degree, to the way we caringly own ourselves. In a fragmentary part of his *Elements of Ethics* (col. IX, 3–10) Hierocles specifies four aspects or manifestations of *oikeiōsis*:

T28: The appropriation in relation to oneself is kindly (*eunoetikē*), and the one in relation to kindred is affectionate (*sterktikē*) (for *oikeiōsis* is signified by many names [this sentence is partly conjectural].) and the one in relation to external property is *choosing* (*hairetikē*). So, just as <in general> we are affectionately (*sterktikōs*) appropriated to our children and appropriated 'choosingly' (*hairetikōs*) in relation to <external> things, so too an animal is appropriated to itself in a 'kindly way' (*eunoētikōs*) and in relation to things that are <useful> for preserving its constitution in a 'selective way' (*eklektikōs*) . . .[41]

Hierocles first specifies the primary *oikeiōsis*, the caring relation animals have to their individual selves, which he calls 'kindly'. Next he specifies an 'affectionate' *oikeiōsis*, the caring relation animals have to their offspring. Thus he supplies a specific name for the parental instincts which the Stoics took to be

[41] ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἑαυτὸ εὐνοητικ[ή, στερ]κτ[ι]κ[ὴ δὲ ἡ συ]γγεν[ι]κή· καλεῖται γὰρ ἡ ο[ἰκείωσις] πολλ[ο]ῖς [ὀνόμασ]ιν. ἡ δ[ὲ] πρὸς τὰ ἐκτὸς χ[ρήματα αἱ]ρετική. καθάπερ οὖν στερκτικῶς μὲν κ[αθόλου οἱ]κε[ι]ούμεθα τοῖς τέκνοις, αἱρετικῶ[ς] δὲ [τοῖς ἐκτο]ς χρήμασιν, οὕ[τ]ω καὶ τ[ὸ] ζῷον ἑαυτῷ [μὲν εὐνο]ητ[ικ]ῶς, τοῖς δὲ πρὸς τ[ή]ρησιν τῆς συστά[σεως συμφέ]ρουσ[ι]ν [ἐ]κλεκτ[ι]κ[ς] . . . I have expanded the Greek and slightly modified the translation of the excerpt that I included in the original publication of this study. Although the text printed here involves extensive supplementation, it is sufficiently secure to guarantee the correctness of the key terms. For further discussion see my commentary in Bastianini and Long 1992.

the psychological basis for human sociability and justice. Thirdly, Hierocles refers to an *oikeiōsis* called 'choosing' (*hairetikē*), and says that its sphere of relation is 'external property'.[42]

Most frustratingly, the papyrus text of this passage breaks off a few lines after Hierocles has restated these points by means of the adverbs *sterktikōs*, *hairetikōs*, and *eunoētikōs*, and added a fourth type of 'selective' *oikeiōsis* concerned with things that preserve an animal's constitution. Hence we have no idea of what more he may have said about these different types of *oikeiōsis*.[43] Nonetheless, his evidence that *oikeiōsis* includes a disposition to choose external property as well as to manifest self-love and affection for others is a vital piece of information, because it tells us something that is not made explicit anywhere else: human interest in the acquisition of material property is a natural *psychological* disposition. The dissemination of Hierocles' doctrine and terminology is confirmed by the non-Stoic author of the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Theaetetus*. That writer, in reference to Stoic theory, names a twofold distinction between *oikeiōsis kēdemonikē* ('caring')—whose object is 'oneself and one's fellow human beings'—and *oikeiōsis hairetikē*, which he characterizes as 'that in virtue of which we choose goods for ourselves'.[44]

The naturalness of wealth as distinct from poverty we already knew (T9). We could also infer (from T17, on mutual help and exchange) that the Stoics regarded it as natural and right for human beings to exploit the earth's resources for their communal needs; the earth is a home that belongs to all. But these points fall short of endorsing private property acquisition as a

[42] In interpreting Hierocles here, we should take account of his tendency to use ordinary language rather than special Stoic uses of certain terms. In orthodox Stoicism *hairesis* and *hairetos* are applied only to what is 'good' in a strictly univocal sense, i.e. moral excellence. But that fits neither Hierocles' usage here nor what I take to to be a similarly broad use of *agatha* in *Anon. comm. in Tht.* (cited in my main text and in n. 44 below). With *ektos chrēmata* Hierocles almost certainly refers to what Greeks in general would understand as 'property'. If he had intended to include other things external to soul and the body, such as fame, he would probably have used not *chrēmata* but *pragmata* or simply *ta ektos*.

[43] Although Hierocles refers to 'animal' in general in this context, he also uses the first-person plural, *oikeioumetha*; and it is virtually certain that at this point in his argument he has begun to develop points concerning human beings specifically; see Bastianini and Long 1992, 444.

[44] *Anon comm. in Plato. Tht.* col. VII, 26–VIII, 1. For the text and discussion of it, see Bastianini and Sedley 1995. The author's comments on *hairetikē oikeiōsis* are in full: 'and the choosing *oikeiōsis*, in virtue of which we choose goods for ourselves, not caring for them for their own sake, but wishing that they accrue to us. This shows that the *oikeiōsis* in relation to oneself and members of one's own species is not "choosing"; for no one chooses himself, but rather, chooses to exist and that the good should belong to oneself.' If, as is probable, the author is reflecting Hierocles' version of Stoic theory, we may take it that by 'choosing' Hierocles means choosing with a view to possessing.

psychological propensity that is natural and rational for human beings. In positing an *oikeiōsis hairetikē*, the Stoics, I suggest, treat the disposition to choose material property as a natural and rational extension of self-love and of human identity as a social animal. What we own, or what we particularly value among our possessions, is a powerful index of personal identity. Hierocles was acutely aware of this fact, for in his *Elements of Ethics* (col. V, 8–20), to prove that self-perception is active even in sleep he adduced such telling examples as the sleeping miser's grip on his purse, the alcoholic's on his bottle, and Heracles' clasp of his club!

I interpret the Stoic position, then, to amount to this: just as we need to love ourselves and to forge affectionate ties with other human beings, in order to become well-functioning personalities, so too the appropriation of private property is a natural human tendency and one that helps to establish the individual's identity as such. This Stoic principle, as we have seen, has both self-regarding and socially useful implications. Society requires persons who acknowledge each other's rights to ownership, and who so organize their acquisitive drives that the common interest is promoted. Hence justice, as Cicero presents it on the Stoics' behalf, is primarily focused on the proper regulation of exchange and economic competition. Our common possession of the earth and its resources, instead of justifying communism, is developed in a direction that has liberal and even capitalist anticipations.[45]

VII

That point is one of the most significant results of this study. But I don't want to make it my last word. For, notwithstanding the originality and enlightenment of the later Stoics' reflections on personhood, they were not in a position to make ownership of material property basic to the identity or rights of every existing human individual. Chrysippus might call a slave:

[45] See my observations in Chapter 15, p. 332. For the purpose of this study, I have done little to distinguish between individual Stoics' doctrines beyond my initial contrast between Zeno and Chrysippus. I do not assume that a Stoic as late as Hierocles is simply parroting the latter. Hierocles' accounts of appropriate action (like those of Panaetius, as reflected in Cicero's *De officiis*) contain nothing that could give offence to the norms of elite Roman society. Conceivably, Hierocles' concept of *oikeiōsis hairetikē* is his own, terminologically at least, and it could be motivated by a wish to circumvent criticism from philosophers like Antiochus of Ascalon, who attacked the Stoics for their monolithic theory of goodness and for positing an ultimate end that was not consistently developed out of people's primary impulses; cf. Cicero, *Fin.* 4.43. However this may be, I take Chrysippus and Panaetius to be broadly agreed that human beings are naturally motivated to acquire property and that justice is basically concerned with the equitable determination of people's rights of ownership.

T29: Someone hired for life (Seneca, *Ben.* 3.22.1)

and not a piece of property, and the Stoics come very close to implying, if not to formally stating, Hegel's connection between personality, respect for other persons, and rights:

T30: Personality essentially involves the capacity for rights and constitutes the concept and the basis of the system of abstract and therefore formal rights. Hence the imperative of right is: 'Be a person and respect others as persons'. (*Philosophy of Right*, sec. 36)

Yet slavery was basic to economic life throughout the five centuries of Stoicism's ancient vitality and mainstream impact. The majority of people had to settle for poverty, even though Stoics officially deemed it 'contrary to nature'. Granted this tension between ideal and actual distribution of property, we can see why the ex-slave Epictetus, in contrast with the wealthy Cicero, emphasizes morality as a person's only inalienable property and source of autonomy (see T8).[46]

In the final analysis, then, Stoicism has to retreat to intangible property, the autonomy of the individual conscience or consciousness, as its basis for personal freedom or for what each individual has by natural right or the gift of God (as Epictetus puts it in 1.1.7–17). Nothing else is granted to us as ours by nature. How, then, might the Stoics respond to the way Hegel links right, freedom, and property-ownership in the following excerpt?

T31: Right is in the first place the immediate embodiment which freedom gives itself in an immediate way, i.e. (*a*) possession, which is *property*-ownership. Freedom is here the freedom of the abstract will in general or, *eo ipso*, the freedom of a single person related only to himself. (*b*) A person by distinguishing himself from himself relates himself to another person, and it is only as owners that these two persons really exist for each other . . . A person must transfer his existence into an external sphere in order to achieve his ideal existence . . . because property is the first embodiment of freedom and so itself a substantive end . . . Since property is the embodiment

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[46] And what of that great Stoic 'capitalist' Seneca? In the second part of *De vita beata* Seneca defends his wealth against the criticism that it is inconsistent with his Stoic principles. I do not find any direct support in his arguments for relating ownership of property to *oikeiōsis*, nor, on the other hand, does that doctrine seem to be in any way inconsistent with them. Points that he makes include the naturalness of the desire for wealth (18), the propriety of possessing it (21), its preferability even for the wise man (22), its being one of the *potiora* ('more worthwhile' things, ibid.), and its being something 'to be had' (25). Seneca's Stoicism is not developed in a technical direction in this treatise; contrast his treatment of *oikeiōsis* in the much later *Ep.* 121. For an interesting account of his strategy in *De vita beata*, cf. Asmis 1990.

of personality, my inward idea and will that something is to be mine is not enough to make it my property; to secure this end occupancy is required. The embodiment which my willing thereby attains involves its recognizability by others. (*Philosophy of Right*, secs. 40, 41, 45, 51)

The Stoics could agree with Hegel's linkage between right, freedom, and property, as the purely abstract principle of one's freedom and entitlement to self-ownership. But they could not take Hegel's further step of treating '[material] property as the first embodiment of freedom and so in itself a substantive end'—freedom, that is, to give concrete realization to one's personality and will. Human beings in Stoicism can be free and fully realized as human without owning material property or even if they have the legal status of slaves.

Yet, *qua* human, every person in Stoicism has the nature and the right to choose material property that does not belong to someone else. The Stoics, then, could and should give conditional endorsement to Hegel's further postulate that: 'A person must transfer his freedom into an external sphere in order to achieve his ideal existence.'[47] For they do maintain that ownership of material property is natural and appropriate to every individual *if* external circumstances put it in his or her way and if no one else's rights of ownership are infringed. What would it have taken for them to make this an unconditional principle? They would have to have grounded it on the abolition of slavery and on the generation of economic circumstances and legislation making ownership of material property an opportunity equally open to all. Nothing in their philosophy is inconsistent with these gigantic social policies. But they did not advocate them, nor did anyone else in antiquity who had the power or authority to do so.

[47] Cf. Seneca, *Vit. beat.* 22: 'Can there be any doubt that wealth gives the wise man greater resources for manifesting his character than poverty? The only virtue in poverty is not to be bowed down and prostrated. In wealth the field is open for moderation, generosity, thoughtfulness, and action on a grand scale.' The idea that wealth furnishes the virtuous person with opportunities lacking to someone impoverished is Aristotelian; cf. *EN* 1.9.

17

Seneca on the self: why now?

As the first speaker at a 2003 conference on 'Seneca and the Self', I could think of no better way to introduce the topic than to ask why it was a particularly apt subject for discussion near the beginning of the third millennium. Only a decade or two before that date this choice of theme would have seemed eccentric to many people. What are we to make of this shift? Or, to put it another way, can we learn something about Seneca on the self by reflecting on the three phases of his modern reception: first, extreme popularity and influence from about 1500 to 1700; second, dismissal, neglect, and virtual oblivion from about 1750 to the mid-twentieth century; and third, the present revival? Do these phases themselves have an intimate bearing on the topic? I think they do.

Seneca was popular in the Renaissance and early Enlightenment because he was relevant. His Stoicism had both intellectual and practical appeal, his theism was in tune with a largely Christian readership, and his prose and poetic rhetoric suited literary taste. When we read Montaigne or Lipsius and other near-contemporary moralists, we are virtually reading Seneca's *Letters* and *Moral Dialogues*. Pre-modern in their political and social outlook, these authors, who were erudite and socially privileged males like Seneca himself, experienced no significant gap between their moral sensibilities and psychological assumptions and those of Seneca. Moreover, they were living during an epoch when Hellenistic philosophy, especially Stoicism, was far more familiar and congenial than the works of Plato and Aristotle. When we watch, or more

likely read, Seneca's tragedies, we almost get a preview of *Titus Andronicus* or *The Duchess of Malfi*.

As we move into the later eighteenth century and beyond, theatrical and literary fashions change. Scholarly and aesthetic taste, under the influence of Germany, shifts from Rome to Greece. For Hegelian idealists post-Aristotelian philosophy represents a marked decline from the apogee reached by Aristotle and Plato. The general reading public is caught up in social and scientific revolution, industrialization, and a whole gamut of attitudes that make Seneca's rhetorical voice seem hopelessly out of touch with current concerns over career and family, or social justice, or religious revivalism, or the Romantic movement in art and literature. When Darwin, Marx, and Freud come on the scene, when realism and domesticity dominate the theatre, where is there a place for Seneca? At the beginning of the twenty-first century, I ask again: why turn to Seneca now?

This is a question to which many responses could be given. In what follows, I shall largely focus on Seneca's capacity to touch modern philosophical nerves. But I should preface that discussion by noting that the Seneca revival is also an important part of a widespread and most welcome reappraisal of the Roman intellectual culture of which he was a most prominent member. We are currently witnessing the realization, by numerous scholars, that Rome offers as rich and complex a field for intellectual and cultural history as the Greece to which it has been so frequently and prejudicially consigned as a feeble successor. Versatile in career, and immensely accomplished as author and engaged participant, Seneca is bound to be at the forefront of any inquiry into the distinctively Roman features of creative literature in the early Roman empire.

A prominent influence on the turn to Seneca specifically must be the writings and diffused influence of Michel Foucault. In his latest published work, and through the dissemination of the lectures he gave in his last years, Foucault put Seneca on the map with remarkable skill and sympathy.[1] When I first read Foucault, my reaction was not one of complete discovery; for I was already familiar with Seneca and the other Roman Stoics. My reaction was, rather, one of recognition tinged with some embarrassment. Foucault was reporting texts and ideas that I knew well, but doing so in ways

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[1] I refer to Foucault 1986, 1988, and 2001. One can disagree with Foucault over details of his interpretation of Seneca (see Inwood 2005, 331–40), but that does not gainsay the seminal influence he has had on promoting general interest in the Roman Stoics.

whose significance I had inadequately registered because of being caught up in prejudices characteristic of my educational background. What I had been acculturated into finding trite and windy edification Foucault made fresh and challenging. His Seneca, along with the other Roman Stoics, emerged as a writer with an in-depth understanding of selfhood and a powerful repertory of quasi-psychoanalytic techniques and therapies.

In the first two of his posthumously published 1981–2 lectures for the Collège de France, in the volume translated as *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault ranges beyond classical antiquity in fixing the context of Seneca and other 'care of the self' Roman authors.[2] He proposes that for them, unlike us post-Cartesians broadly speaking, epistemology was intimately linked to spirituality: these authors maintained that we do not know ourselves, simply in virtue of introspection or the evidence that presents itself to immediate consciousness. Rather, to know oneself for a Stoic like Seneca is as much a spiritual as an epistemological project. The truths requisite to self-knowledge are not immediately accessible; cognizance of them requires drastic self-transformation on the part of the subject, and along with self-knowledge they are presumed to deliver the route to happiness and tranquillity.

In modernity, by contrast, Foucault finds a rupture between truth and salvation. The modern subject, he observes, is capable of truth, but truth has ceased to be salvational. Foucault recognizes partial exceptions to this 'rupture' in Marxism and psychoanalysis, but, while the questions these movements ask are ancient, inasmuch as they ask about the subject's relation to truth, they approach these questions in terms of social structures. Foucault finds Lacan the only modern thinker since Freud who has precisely linked the subject to truth in the ancient way—that is, as Foucault puts it, someone who has seen the price to be paid for saying the truth and who considers the effect on the subject who states the truth about himself.

Foucault's observations about the salvational and spiritual aspects of ancient philosophy's injunction to 'know oneself' (partly anticipated and reinforced by his eminent colleague Pierre Hadot) have added an important historical and existential dimension to the analytical study of Hellenistic and Roman ethics.[3] His avowedly loose comparison with Marxism and psychoanalysis alerts us to the fact that there are affinities between modern ideas of alienation, false consciousness, and neurosis, and the Roman Stoic

[2] Foucault 2005, which is a translation of Foucault 2001.
[3] See Hadot 1995.

diagnosis of the unhappy self as unknowingly falling short of authenticity and a life in agreement with nature.

Excellent though these insights are, I do not propose to focus this study chiefly on Foucault. My question, Why Seneca now?, can be posed in more contemporary and more specific terms than those Foucault applied. We need to follow him in recognizing that much of Seneca's daily probing and ascetic monitoring of the self was shared by other thinkers of his epoch, but we also need to identify salient and distinctive features of Seneca's particular approach to selfhood. His agenda in the *Letters to Lucilius* includes topics of immediate relevance to our own philosophy and cultural studies. These topics include questions about personal identity, the contributions of nature and ideology to the construction of the self, the temporality and narrative structure of the self, the self as an interlocutor, self-fashioning, and the reflexive language of selfhood. Seneca's observations on such issues as these are discussible and pertinent, irrespective of what we think about the applicability of his doctrinal Stoicism or of how we situate him as a Stoic thinker, practitioner, and public figure in the early Roman empire.

That relevance also applies, I think, to his treatment of the self as a person or locus of value. I don't mean that an appreciation of his work, from our point of view, can or should sidestep its deep embeddedness in Stoic philosophy. It is likely that readers of this book will disagree about the acceptability of many Stoic doctrines that Seneca endorses.[4] Yet, Seneca's value as a theorist of selfhood is not vitiated, in my opinion, if we completely reject his Stoic commitment to the divinity of human rationality, for instance, or the moral indifference of all values except virtue and vice.

There are also more technical reasons for turning to Seneca at the present time. While Foucault may be right to identify the Cartesian moment as significant for displacing Stoicism's spiritualized truth about the self, the Cartesian ego is no longer a plausible candidate for the essence of selfhood. There are excellent reasons for doubting whether the self is essentially private, interior, and granted privileged access to itself. That idea has been heavily contested by Wittgenstein, Ryle, and many more recent philosophers, psychologists,

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[4] Where we position ourselves, as moderns, in relation to doctrinal Stoicism is a question to which answers are likely to depend as much on personal temperament as on intellectual affiliation. For some approaches that combine sympathy with criticism, see Annas 1993, Becker 1998, and Chapters 2 and 18 of this volume. By contrast, Veyne 1993, pp. v–vi, seems to think that all that we today can appropriate from ancient Stoicism is its affirmation of personal autonomy in a world devoid of the 'optimistic naturalism' the original Stoics affirmed.

and social scientists. We are quite capable of self-deception and of knowing ourselves less well than others know us. Christopher Gill, in his excellent book *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy*, has argued that the 'subjective-individualist conception' of selfhood—inherited from Descartes and focused on self-consciousness of one's unique personal identity—was not the principal ancient model. That model, as we shall see, is not entirely absent from Seneca, but it is regularly complicated and overshadowed by the object-ive and normative aspects of selfhood that Gill rightly emphasizes.

The Stoics took virtues and vices to be mental dispositions that are com-pletely perceptible, and they emphasized the congruity between mental dis-position and unimpeded bodily action.[5] I find no trace of Cartesian privacy or privileged access in Seneca's philosophical or dramatic treatment of the self. That self reveals itself in how it acts and in what it communicates. It is, we could say, a performative self, though, as Catherine Edwards (1997) has aptly observed, Seneca constantly provokes us to wonder about the relation between his emphatic authorial *personae* (plural) and the man behind those masks. This performative and hardly interior self links and unifies the author of the letters and other prose works, with all their theatrical trappings, to the author of the tragedies. Seneca's performative, non-Cartesian self also helps to explain why some of his tragedies have begun to attract theatre directors.

Relatedly, those who doubt whether the self, as distinct from the embodied person, is a genuine entity or a subject for metaphysics, need have no serious difficulty in approaching Seneca. Like all Stoics, of course, he identifies the essence of the person with the mind as distinct from the body, but the point of this weak dualism is ethical and evaluative, not ontological.[6] Stoics recom-mend us to identify our selves with our minds as distinct from our bodies, but in doing so they are not proposing that the mind belongs to a different order of reality from the body, and they recognize that persons may wittingly or unwittingly decline to accept this identification.[7] Their position resembles that famously characterized by Donald Davidson (1982) as 'anomalous mon-ism': that is, the thesis that all events are physical, but not all events have the distinctively intentionalist features of the mental.

In urging himself and Lucilius to cultivate a 'good mentality' (*bona mens*), Seneca's principal point is that objective human excellence and authentic

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[5] See Chrysippus *ap.* Plutarch, *Stoic. rep.* 1042E–F (LS 60R) on the perceptibility of virtues and vices, and Epictetus 2.18.15–26; 2.22.19–20, on mind and unimpeded movements.

[6] For Stoic theory on the mind–body relation, see Long 1982, 1999, and Annas 1992.

[7] See e.g. Epictetus 1.3, with discussion in Long 2002, 157–60.

happiness depend intrinsically and essentially on the state of one's mind, and only instrumentally and contingently on the health and condition of one's body.[8] This division between mind and body involves the folk psychology we all recognize in everyday consciousness; and it is compatible with the strict physicalism endorsed both by Stoicism and by most modern theorists.

Seneca, moreover, taps completely into our contemporary world when we move from the academy into popular culture. Go to any American bookstore, and you find no larger section than the one devoted to self-help—considerably larger, in fact, than that which is headed philosophy. There you can buy, for instance, the women's magazine called *Self*. In stark contrast with Seneca, this periodical asks its readers to identify with their bodies rather than their minds. The cover of one issue I perused proclaimed (June 2000): 'Say it: I love my body', and most pages included advertisements for clothes, make-up, and advice on reducing weight and enhancing figure. Seneca would have enjoyed turning the section 'Sexual-health horror stories' into epigrammatic Latin. He would not have thought much of *Self*'s '12-minute antistress kit'. Yet echoes of the *Letters to Lucilius* do occur in *Self*, notwithstanding the magazine's fixation on the female body-beautiful: for instance, a quiz, asking 'Are you happy—really happy?', with the injunction: 'Search your soul and find out', followed by the authentically Stoic maxim: 'True happiness is more a state of mind than of circumstances.' The organizers of the conference I addressed with this study invited contributors to consider whether Seneca's Roman Stoicism is a hidden but informing presence in modern versions of an ethics of personhood and subjectivity. The answer delivered by *Self* is: a distorted but not so hidden presence.

II

So much by way of introduction. I now offer a brief context for situating Seneca's ideas about selfhood in the Graeco-Roman tradition. Then, in conclusion, I shall review some of his most distinctive contributions, concentrating on the *Letters to Lucilius* because, by virtue of their epistolary self-revelations, they are the works of Seneca most apposite to my topic.

Self is an especially difficult concept to analyse because, like consciousness, it is what each of us has when we are awake, and extends beyond waking

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[8] For *bona mens* see *Ep*. 10.4; 17.1, and for caring for one's body only to the extent that health requires, *Ep*. 5.4–5; 8.2; 14.1–2; 15. Cf. Plato, *Republic* 9, 591c.

consciousness into our dreams. We can never get sufficiently distant from our particular selves to ask exactly what our own selfhood (or anyone else's) consists in because, by asking the question, we already embody an answer. Perhaps the clearest approach to the concept of selfhood is to take it as a name for one's individual and temporal identity from two distinct but necessarily overlapping perspectives—one objective and the other subjective.[9] I am (or have) a unique human body of determinate age, ethnicity, parentage, and (from Seneca's perspective) gender; these are objective facts about who (or what) I am and over which I have no control. But I am also a unique centre of agency and consciousness, with a particular intentionality, temperament, and range of attitudes, beliefs, likes, and dislikes. I call this second aspect of self-hood subjective, not because it is strictly private and interior, or completely voluntary, or detachable from my bodily and objective identity, but because my subjectivity is at least to some extent up to me, and to that extent represents both what I *choose* to identify with and what other persons typically take *me* to be.

From Homer onwards Graeco-Roman culture provides remarkably rich representations of these dual aspects of selfhood. Homeric heroes have an objective identity as young Greek or Trojan males of aristocratic lineage, but they also have a subjective self constituted not only by their distinct temperaments and prowess, but also by what matters to them as the particular individuals that they are.

Homer also has a strong inkling of a third aspect of selfhood, which I shall call normative identity, that manifests itself when one hero rebukes himself or another hero for falling short of what the situation requires.[10] In such passages we have the germ of the idea that Greek and Roman philosophers will develop in great depth—the idea of a universal norm, a true self, a standard of general human excellence to which this particular person is currently not living up.

We should notice how Homer's implicit concept of normative identity complicates my initial distinction between subjective and objective aspects of the self. Normative identity can only be aspired to by the intentions and commitments of persons as individuals, and thus far appears to be subjective. But it is also objective because what it involves is not the deployment of this or that individual's uniquely personal attributes and potentialities but the achievement of heroism as such, which is taken to be a self-evident social

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[9] For further discussion of selfhood in Stoicism see Long 1991 and Inwood 2005, ch. 12.

[10] e.g. *Iliad* 6.521–5 (Hector rebuking Paris), 22.104–7 (Hector rebuking himself).

good. Normative identity is also objective because Greek or Trojan males of aristocratic lineage *are* heroes, and identifiable as a class accordingly. They all have, or rather should have, a heroic self.

Hence we need to make a further refinement to the concept of selfhood by distinguishing between occurrent subjectivity (a person's present and particular mind-set and consciousness) and normative identity (what the person would like to be or, according to specific social norms, should aspire to be). Greek oratory provides numerous examples of situations where the speaker cajoles his audience for failing to live up to their normative identity as Athenian democrats or resolute gardians of the state.[11] In the Roman world, and hence Seneca's immediate context, with its elaborate distinctions of rank and role, the social determinants of selfhood are simultaneously objective and normative, as the word *officium* (meaning a person's office, social role, and consequential obligation) indicates; for the *fact* that someone holds an office provides no guarantee that the office-holder will perform appropriately.

The self, of course, in all the aspects I have been mentioning can be staged, spurious, feigned, or simply authorial. In some Greek tragedies, most poignantly in Sophocles' *Oedipus tyrannus*, we witness the crisis that occurs when that which persons have believed to be their basic and objective identity is revealed to be completely erroneous. Oedipus had so premised his self on his supposed parentage and regal role that he doesn't know what to be when those identifiers are taken from him. Stoic philosophers propose that one's normative selfhood is never so implicated in objective contingencies and specific social roles that it must be undermined by external happenings. There is always something for one to be as a rational agent or citizen of the world, even when subject to exile or prison or threat of execution.[12]

This is not to say that Stoic philosophers envision a purely private or personal or introspective selfhood divorced from determinate roles. As we observe in Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius, the moral doctrines of Stoicism are typically fleshed out in contexts where the subject is invested with a strong familial or social identity, such as father, son, local citizen, senator, or emperor.[13] Seneca, probably because he takes himself to be an elderly retiree, tends to be reticent about such roles in the *Letters*, where he focuses instead on such universally applicable situations as his own or Lucilius' or an imagined other's disposition

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[11] e.g. Isocrates, *Areopagiticus* 1–10, 76–84; Demosthenes, *Against Phillip* 4.1–10.

[12] Epictetus most powerfully exemplies this outlook: see 1.2.26; 1.24.12–19; 2.5.18–22; 2.10.3–4.

[13] See Long 2002, 232–44.

in regard to friendship, bereavement, illness, travel, old age, and so forth.[14] However, that reticence rarely turns the *Letters* into impersonal sermons, as is often the case in his *Moral Dialogues*. Rather, as I have found in teaching the *Letters* to undergraduates, it enhances his artful capacity to engage with us as modern persons; for the aspects of selfhood he typically invokes have a diachronic relevance and dialogical immediacy that often transcends the Roman particularities of his epistolary contexts. I shall return to this important point.

From Homer onward the ancient literary record, both Greek and Roman, shows an acute awareness of differences in personality type, temperament, and aptitude. Plato charted these features of selfhood in numerous ways in his dialogues, and they are presupposed by Aristotle in his doctrine of the ethical mean: that is to say, the normative ethical disposition which is 'relative to us', and hence conditioned by the individual's mentality and inherent capacities.[15] The Stoic Panaetius' celebrated doctrine of the four *personae* requires persons to distribute their identity between their common attributes as human beings on the one hand, and their individual roles, personalities, and avocations on the other.[16] Epictetus proceeds quite similarly.[17] This multi-layered approach to selfhood implies the modern ethical nostrum that 'ought implies can'. It also requires individuals to scrutinize themselves— their strengths and weaknesses—as an essential condition for trying to live well by making progress towards the Stoic goal of rational perfection.

For approaching Seneca, and indeed ancient philosophy's general conception of normative selfhood, we need to emphasize the tradition's shared endorsement of the idea that the requisite self-scrutiny cannot be achieved in isolation or without external guidance. There is a need for role-models—the Aristotelian 'prudent man' (*phronimos*), the Stoic or Epicurean sage (*sophos*), historical paradigms such as Socrates and Cato, and also for texts endowed with virtually scriptural authority. Exemplary figures and doctrinal statements provide the occurrent self with a normative standard for self-assessment and aspiration. Yet, these figures and texts, central to

[14] As Edwards 1997, 24, observes: 'The authorial self the reader is offered in Seneca's Letters is turned not towards the outside world of Roman political life but rather inwards.' She notes how Seneca explicitly contrasts his Letters with Cicero's politically loaded correspondence (*Ep.* 118.1–3).

[15] See Aristotle, *EN* 2.6–9.

[16] See Cicero, *Off.* 1.107–15, with good discussion by Gill 1988. In stating the theory, Cicero does not attribute it to Panaetius, but that Stoic philosopher is almost certainly the principal source of the text. What I call 'normative identity' is principally registered by the theory's first *persona*, i.e. the human race's distinctiveness from other creatures in virtue of rationality, which 'is the source of everything honourable and fitting' (1.107).

[17] See Long 2002, 256–7.

the tradition though they are, have no interlocutory force. They cannot issue challenges or engage in dialogue. It is no coincidence that the concept of normative selfhood first becomes quite explicit and theorized in Plato's Socratic dialogues, where the interrogatory method of the Socratic *elenchus* often has a protreptic function.[18] The *elenchus* assumes that we need the equivalent of Socratic challenges, issued by a mentoring questioner, in order to confront our occurrent subjectivity (beliefs and values) and gain insight into the truths requisite to attempting radical self-improvement. And like psychoanalysis, it assumes that we cannot, simply on our own, practise adequate self-scrutiny; for what matters or should matter to us is very likely unacknowledged, concealed, inconsistent with our occurrent subjectivity, and therefore impracticable without external prodding and encouragement.

Epictetus appropriates and adapts the Socratic *elenchus* quite explicitly, sometimes interrogating his actual or imaginary interlocutors in authentically Socratic manner.[19] In Seneca's *Letters* the frequent interventions of his 'someone says' (*inquit*), generally to register an objection to the points Seneca has been making in his authorial identity, may have a Socratic echo, and there is much else there that recalls Socratic dialogue. But Seneca's stance in his epistolary relation to Lucilius is less directly redolent of the Socratic *elenchus* than of the position, shared by Aristotle, that friendship offers the self a mirror or alter ego whereby a self can make discoveries that it would not be able to register on its own.[20] In the absence of a friend or actual interlocutor, you practise on yourself. You evoke your own alter ego, the normative self that you aspire to be, which Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius take to be the voice of perfected reason or god.[21] The *Meditations* of Marcus, the jottings of himself *To himself*, are precisely a conversation between his occurrent self and this normative *alter ego*.

III

When we ask what is new, distinctive, and especially pertinent to our modern selves in Seneca's contributions, we need to preface our enquiry by

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[18] See Slings 1999.

[19] See Long 2002, ch. 3.

[20] See Aristotle, *EN* 9, 1169b28–1170 a4 and the probably unAristotelian *Magna moralia* 1213a10–26. For a selection of Seneca's epistolary comments on friendship, see 3.2; 6.2–3; 27.1–2; 40.1.

[21] Seneca, *Ep*. 41.1–2; 66.12; Epictetus 1.14.11–14; 2.8.12–13, 23; Marcus 5.27.

acknowledging his intimate involvement in the tradition I have just been sketching. The Socratic antecedents of Stoicism are especially evident in Seneca's obsession with self-scrutiny, self-fashioning, and orienting values and desires on normative qualities of mind and character in detachment from externals and the body. At the same time, we need to recognize, as Foucault so ably has done, the special emphasis of the Imperial Roman epoch on care of the self as a lifelong project, engaged in for its own, rather than for the community's, sake, and involving a host of ascetic exercises and meditative techniques.[22]

However, what I find most intriguing in Seneca's *Letters* are ideas and representations of selfhood that are creative and thought-provoking beyond their relationship to the traditions and historical context I have been speaking about in the second section of this chapter. Much here has to do with the epistolary form and Seneca's ostensible communication and staging of his day-by-day experience. In what follows all my references to Seneca's self should be prefaced with the word 'authorial' because, like Catherine Edwards, I do not wish to make any assumptions about Seneca's autobiographical sincerity.[23] Nor do I presume that any correspondence he may actually have had with Lucilius is recorded word for word in any parts of the corpus of *Letters*.[24]

Unlike the professional Stoic teachers Musonius and Epictetus, Seneca presents himself to Lucilius as a strictly private person in retirement from the public world. Unlike the emperor Marcus, he does not write to himself from the perspective of someone with duties assigned to him by his office, but shares himself with a would-be like-minded but junior friend.[25] In existential terms the Senecan occurrent self could be anyone's middle-aged or elderly self, or at least the self of any mature person committed to the project of progressive and shared self-improvement. Similarly, the more shadowy self of Lucilius. Yet what gives these selves their universal interest is, in fact, their accessibility and temporality. We, as third parties to the conversation, can identify with Seneca and Lucilius because their specific experience as the particular day's readers, travellers, tourists, and so forth are place-fillers for any one of us.

    [22] See Foucault 2005, 81–105.   [23] Edwards 1997, 22–3.
    [24] For a judicious assessment of the reality of the correspondence, see Russell 1975, 79, who calls it 'a work of art that claims immortality, but a work that was growing and developing throughout Seneca's last year or two of life'.
    [25] Russell 1975, 75, says of Lucilius, 'Career and literary interests make him seem a reflection of himself'; and, comparing Marcus Aurelius, he adds 'Seneca writes to an *alter ego*', which is not the normative alter ego (Seneca's ideal self or perfected rationality) I characterized above.

I acknowledge, of course, that Seneca uses the letter form for doctrinal and protreptic purposes that frequently set this personalist strategy in abeyance. That is especially true of the later stretches of the correspondence. It is the earlier letters, on the whole, that are the most personal, but the points I want to make now are evident throughout.

The most striking and creative feature of Seneca's reflections on selfhood is his preoccupation with the flow of time. The opening of the very first Letter registers temporal themes to which he returns repeatedly: *Ita fac, mi Lucili: vindica te tibi, et tempus quod adhuc aut auferebatur aut subripiebatur aut excidebat collige et serva*. ('Do it so, my Lucilius: claim yourself for yourself; gather together and preserve the time which is still being removed or stolen or slipping away'.) The peremptory 'do it' (*fac*), a motif of the earlier Letters, summons Lucilius to work on his occurrent self here and now.[26] Note too the reflexive injunction: 'Claim yourself for yourself', which, in Seneca's imperatival form of the verb *vindicare*, probably hints at that word's frequent usage for claiming freedom from literal enslavement.[27] Negligence in managing time's incessant flow is tantamount to alienation of the self, an enslavement to false values; for time, Seneca tells Lucilius, is the only thing that is ours. Nature has paradoxically granted us ownership of just this one fugitive and slippery thing. We cannot stop time's flow, but we can attempt to clasp every hour and seize the day. To hang upon tomorrow is to lose oneself.

Implicit in *vindica te tibi* are two selves or two aspects of one self—occurrent and normative. We age as every hour passes; that is a brute fact about any self. Yet, our dependence on time's flow is also our challenge to achieve autonomy by stabilizing the occurrent self and treating every day as equal in significance to a lifetime. Seneca opens Letter 12 with vivid observations concerning his awareness of his age and the passage of time. Then he neutralizes the significance of his ageing by telling Lucilius that one *should* live every day as if it were one's last. Youth and old age are objectively different not only in time but also, as he says in Letter 121.16, in their 'constitution'; yet the objective differences between the various stages of life from infancy to old age are glued together by the fact that 'I am the same me who was an infant, and a boy, and a young man' (*ego tamen idem sum qui et infans fui et puer et adulescens*); and I am naturally endowed with self-concern, meaning care for myself, at every stage.

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[26] Cf. 19.1 *ita fac*; 23.3 *hoc ante omnia fac*; 31.5 *fac te ipse felicem*; 63.7 *fac ergo*.
[27] I owe this point to Bob Kaster.

Seneca, then, can envision the self as a fixed point within the flow of time, whose relation to its past and future is marked by the constancy of self-concern. That constancy, which has its theoretical basis in the Stoic concept of innate 'appropriation of oneself' (*oikeiōsis*), is his answer to the question of what personal identity consists in: continuity of self-concern through time.[28] Ask me who I am, and the answer is a particular self-concerned subject who does not change in that respect throughout life. Here we have an experientially plausible concept of lifelong selfhood for everyone. To be human at all is to be a self-concerned individual. However, as Seneca says in Letter 121, the constancy of self-concern is mediated by changes of constitution or content as a life evolves. And here he gestures again to the normative self. The self that, according to Stoicism, a mature person should be concerned to cultivate is rationality or a *bona mens*. To make other things the objects of one's self-concern at this stage of one's life is a failure of proper selfhood, a failure to claim oneself for one's self.

Now we get to the aspect of temporality which is decisive throughout the *Letters*—the focus on progress, self-improvement, conversion, self-perfection, and would-be completion before death supervenes. Progress, as is well known, was a distinctively Stoic concept from the beginning, but it is most prominently attested in Seneca and Epictetus.[29] It involves the idea that human life should be normatively construed as a sequence of efforts, both intellectual and practical, to arrive as close as possible at the virtuous disposition of the sage and to make that project one's consistent aim even though its actual achievement would be unprecedented. The elusive and infallible sage, though an essential component of strict Stoic theory, tends to be played down in the more practical contexts of the Roman Stoics, including Cicero's treatment of Stoicism in *De officiis*. Seneca's frequent recourse to the sage in his *Letters* is a bit surprising, and hardly one of his more promising lines from our point of view.[30] However, we can mitigate that difficulty by reading his allusions to the sage as a way of concretizing the normative selfhood that is central to his project. In this way the sage becomes virtually a metaphor for the normative self, the self that Seneca proposes that he and Lucilius have it in them to progress towards by monitoring their experience every day and by addressing the faults that they identify.

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[28] On *oikeiōsis* see Chapter 16 above, and the bibliography cited in n. 36.

[29] For early Stoicism, see the contexts cited in LS vol. 1, p. 511. In Seneca see e.g. *Ep*. 4.1–3; 5.1; 6.1, 7; for Epictetus, see 1.4; 3.2; 3.12; 4.10.

[30] Some representative contexts from the *Letters*: 9.8–17; 59.14–17; 70.4–6; 71.26–8; 73.13–15; 83.27. For Epictetus' sporadic references to the sage, see Long 2002, 37.

The normative self, in fact, is one's self, but one's self reclaimed from alienation by time and false values. It is not activated by going outside oneself, but by introspection and aspiration guided by Stoicism:

Ad verum bonum specta et de tuo gaude. Quid est autem hoc 'de tuo'? te ipso et tui optimae parte.

Look to true goodness and take pleasure in your own. What do I mean by 'your own'? I mean you yourself, or rather the best part of yourself. (23.6)

Intellego, Lucili, non emendari me tantum sed transfigurari; nec hoc promitto iam aut spero, nihil in me superesse quod mutandum sit . . . Et hoc ipsum argumentum est in melius translati animi, quod vitia sua quae adhuc ignorabat videt . . . Concipere animo non potes quantum momenti adferre mihi singulos dies videam.

I observe, Lucilius, that I am not only being corrected but transformed. I'm not promising or expecting that there's nothing left in me needing change . . . The proof of this improvement is coming to see faults of which one was previously unaware . . . You can't imagine how much progress I see each day bringing to me. (6.1–3)

Progress is premised upon making the best use of time, and that in turn requires constant self-scrutiny, using any and every experience to cast light on one's occurrent self and its relation to one's true or normative self. It is also premised, as this letter makes plain, on having a like-minded friend to share one's experience.

Seneca's reflections on selfhood are most intriguing where he negotiates the shifts between his occurrent self and his normative ideal, or where he comments on what he learnt about himself and his feelings from his responses to circumstances, whether returning from the games more cruel than he entered them (7.3), or reacting to seasickness (53.2–6) or an asthma attack (54.1–5), or finding nothing prepared on his visit to his Alban villa *except himself* (123.1), or loving himself more in consequence of his wife Paulina's love for himself (104.5).

In the last surviving letter he links the theme of perfectibility to the human consciousness of time (124.17). Endowed as we uniquely are, among animals, with the sense of past, present, and future, we are uniquely capable of grasping the idea of a perfected nature—a normatively completed life. One might see an anticipation here of Heidegger's idea that authentic being is 'being-to-death', but an anticipation completely free from the dread (*Angst*) with which Heidegger associates such self-knowledge. Seneca's *memento mori* is more than a reminder of the self's temporal limits. Like his preoccupation

with old age, the prospect of death is an essential component of his injunction to claim oneself for oneself while there is still time.

Seneca's normative self seeks to be master of place as well as time:

Primum argumentum compositae mentis existimo posse consistere et secum morari. (2.1)

I consider the first proof of a well-adjusted mentality to be the capacity to stay put and spend time with oneself.

Quaeris quare te fuga ista non adiuvet? tecum fugis. Onus animi deponendum est: non ante tibi ullus placebit locus. (28.2)

You ask why the flight you have gone in for is doing you no good. You are fleeing *along with yourself.* The mind's load needs to be shed, and only then will any place give you pleasure.

Vaco, Lucili, vaco, et ubicumque sum, ibi meus sum. Rebus enim me non trado sed commodo, nec consector perdendi temporis causas; et quocumque constiti loco, ibi cogitationes meas tracto et aliquid in animo salutare converso. (62.1)

I am quite unencumbered, Lucilius, and wherever I am, I am my own. I don't surrender myself to things, but I adapt myself to them and don't look for reasons for wasting time. Wherever I am located, I deal with my thoughts and turn over something salutary.

Even friendship is essentially unaffected by absence because a friend is a 'possession' for one's thoughts; hence Seneca and Lucilius can still be vividly together through their daily correspondence (55.8–11).

IV

I shall conclude these glimpses of Seneca's representations of selfhood by briefly returning to the question the conference organizers posed concerning the extent to which his Roman Stoicism can be discerned as a presence in modern versions of an ethics of personhood and subjectivity. For this purpose I find it useful to invoke the work of Charles Taylor, who has written so perceptively on numerous issues concerned with that topic.

In *Sources of the Self*, subtitled *The Making of the Modern Identity*, Taylor attributes the salient difference between modern and pre-modern senses of identity to what he calls 'our post-Romantic understanding of individual differences as well as . . . the importance we give to expression in each person's discovery of his or her moral horizon' (1989, 28). Hence, he suggests, our reluctance to think that questions of moral orientation can all be solved in simply universal terms. Seneca's Stoicism, like ancient ethics in general, is

clearly pre-modern in its universalism, because it assumes that its doctrines are the proper moral orientation for every person. My remarks about Seneca have taken this for granted; but I have also suggested that his negotiations between occurrent subjectivity and normative identity, and his complex sense of the self's relation to its own temporality, overstep the historical limitations of his Stoicism, enabling us to recognize the phenomenology of our own experience in much that he says.

Quite apart from that, however, we can regard Seneca as thoroughly Taylorian in his understanding of personhood if, with slight anachronism, we take Seneca to be talking about personhood in his explicit comments on the self. In an article entitled 'The person' (1985), Taylor proposes the following set of attributes for what we mean by a person: (*a*) an agent with purposes, desires, aversions, and so forth; (*b*) an agent with a sense of yourself as an agent capable of making plans for your life, holding values in virtue of which different plans seem better or worse, with the capacity to choose between them; (*c*) a unitary subject; (*d*) a self-interpreting animal, whose consciousness is determined by what it finds significant; (*e*) reflexivity and self-awareness; (*f*) linguistic capacity and disclosure in public space.

In making these points, Taylor has philosophical targets. He wants to resist the idea that consciousness, as a mark of personhood, is simply representational and value-neutral. Rather, he comments: 'We often have it happen that our becoming more aware of what we feel alters what we feel . . . How we understand [something] and are aware of it is constitutive of how we feel' (pp. 261–2), which echoes the Stoic teaching on the cognitive nature of emotions.[31] Like Foucault, Taylor thinks that science has made us suspicious of subjectivity because crediting things with significance is tarred with anthropocentricity. Furthermore, Taylor resists the still prevalent (Cartesian) idea that becoming a person is essentially a biological process of interiorization and the development of self-consciousness, as distinct from participation in public space and conversation.

Purposive agency, life-planning, unity, self-awareness, reflexivity—these Taylorian features of personhood are all strongly present in Seneca's *Letters*. Still more interesting, to my mind, are Seneca's implicit endorsements of Taylor's characteristic points about what it is to be a fully fledged (though not necessarily admirable) person: self-interpreting, conversing, publicly observable, and, above all, having one's consciousness and feelings shaped by

[31] See Chapter 18 below.

one's values and by what one finds significant.[32] I have already quoted enough Seneca to show his attention to this last point. But here, to underline it, is a final citation:

In hoc omnium discursu properantium ad litus magnam ex pigritia mea sensi voluptatem, quod epistulas meorum accepturus non properavi scire quis illic esset rerum mearum status, quid adferrent: olim iam nec perit quicquam mihi nec adquiritur. (77.3)

As everyone was rushing to the shore, I felt great pleasure from my sloth because, while waiting for letters from my friends, I didn't rush to learn what news they might be bringing about my affairs. For some time now gains and losses have meant nothing to me.

Seneca comments on himself as a former business-news addict, testing and enjoying his present indifference to that compulsion.

Taking the *Letters* as a whole, we find such autobiographical passages only intermittently. Seneca does not reveal himself, like Nietzsche, 'to fashion a literary character out of himself and a literary work out of his life'.[33] He uses himself as a would-be progressing Stoic and Stoic mentor, drawing on his experience, imagination, and literary virtuosity for vivifying that suprapersonal project. Yet, in that process, he offers us not only an invitation to review ourselves according to his own creative Stoicism, but also portrays a remarkable mind at work on itself in a manner that is probably unprecedented before Augustine.[34] While the Stoic sage was a moral paragon devoid of idiosyncrasy, the most powerful exponents of Roman Stoicism were quite distinct personalities with their own styles of self-expression. A page of Seneca is quite different from a page of Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius, and the differences have as much to do with verbal tone and wit as with literary genre.

Each of these Stoic authors owes his effectiveness to the variations he plays in his own way on their common Stoic themes, while each also registers how far he himself falls short of an ideal self. As moderns, we can change the content of their ideal. But much of our modern responsiveness to them—and hence why we read Seneca now—is due to the fact that we intuitively recognize ourselves in the gap that they share and set before us between our occurrent and our normative selves, meaning the gap between what we are and what we would like to be.

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[32] Note how Medea, in Seneca's tragedy of that name, characterizes the adult, infanticidal passion, for which all her earlier crimes have been merely preparatory, as *now* identifying her as Medea (*Medea nunc sum*, 910), and enabling her to tell Jason 'the day is mine' (1017).

[33] Cf. Nehamas 1985, 137. [34] Cf. Edwards 1997, 24–5.

18

Epictetus on understanding and managing emotions

I

Situated as we are today in the world of cybernetics, instant global communication, and astonishing advances in the life sciences, we might seem to be almost light-years away from ancient Greek and Roman philosophy of mind. Our modern science began by overturning Aristotelian cosmology and Ptolemaic astronomy. Those models of the universe are of great historical interest, but they have nothing to teach our physicists. Our neurophysiologists are making spectacular advances in mapping the brain's neurons and synapses. Surely the ancient philosophers, most of whom located the centre of consciousness in the heart and not the brain, were as much in error about the workings of the mind as they were concerning the dynamics of the cosmos? In this study I want to argue, using the example of Epictetus, that ancient moral psychology can still be very good to think with because it addresses problems that human beings of any time or place encounter. Yet, Epictetus is embedded in his own time and place and Stoic doctrines; so I shall not be claiming that we should accept all his ideas as completely applicable to ourselves.

Love and hate, desire and aversion, elation and fear—these contrasting mental states appear basic to our human nature; for without them we would seemingly lack the motivation to make anything of ourselves, relate to other persons, and adapt ourselves to our external environment. To put it briefly,

emotions are to a great extent our thread of life. Yet, by the same measure that emotions appear integral to our sheer survival, let alone our being real persons, they can no less obviously be the source of our ruin. War, crime, family disputes, and personal unhappiness are typically motivated by anger, jealousy, and hatred, just as altruism is typically motivated by compassion, love, or generosity. For the devastation emotions can cause, what better example can I take than the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 on New York and Washington, together with the United States government's precipitate and myopic responses to it from which the world continues to suffer? One of my Berkeley graduate students, a normally mild man, said to me just after that attack: 'I feel like hitting someone.' We understand his response, and we all know that it may be better to voice such emotions than to let them fester without open acknowledgement. But must we have such emotions, are they good for us, do they simply take us over in a situation like September 11th; or are we responsible for them and capable, in principle, of refraining from anger and aggression? What, in a word, are emotions?

This question was keenly debated by the leading ancient philosophers, and it continues to be debated today.[1] The ancients all agreed that understanding and managing emotions is the most important project of moral philosophy; for no one, they claimed, can live socially well or achieve long-term well-being with a character that permits gut feelings and sheer passions to rule their lives, as distinct from good reasoning, thoughtfulness, and long-term planning. Greek literature, especially Homer and tragedy, is packed with examples of persons who ruin their own and other people's lives as a result of giving way to anger or some other passion; and the philosophers drew on this material. Medea, who killed her children to avenge herself on her faithless husband Jason, is a prime example, and we have only to read newspapers to realize that there are modern Medeas.

According to Plato and Aristotle, emotions owe their origin both to physiological factors and the fact that our minds include a non-rational component.[2] That component, in association with the body, gives us our basic drives for food, drink, sexual satisfaction, and self-assertion; many of our emotions are

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[1] Here is a selective bibliography, starting with studies of ancient philosophy on the topic, and continuing with modern philosophy: Brunschwig and Nussbaum 1993, Cooper 1999, Fortenbaugh 1975, Nussbaum 1994, Sihvola and Engberg-Pedersen 1998, Sorabji 2000, Tieleman 2003, Goldie 2000, Nussbaum 2001, Rorty 1980, Solomon 1993, Wollheim 1999.

[2] See Plato, *Rep.* 4, 436–41c; 9, 588b–589b; *Tim.* 86c–87b and other passages discussed by Fortenbaugh 1975; for Aristotle, see *An.* 1.1; *EN* 1.13, 2.3; *Rhet.* 2.1–11.

simply pleasurable or painful responses to the success or failure of these drives. These philosophers also recognized that complex emotions like anger and jealousy involve opinion or judgement, but such cognitive features, in the case of emotion, are still for them the mark of the mind's non-rational component. This component cannot be eradicated, but it can be tamed and made to serve our long-term interests provided that we make it subordinate to the rule of reason. Our ethical project, accordingly, involves learning to take pleasure and pain in the right things, shaping our emotions into personally and socially useful motivations.

This model of the mind, with its presumption that emotions are quite distinct from reason, has strongly influenced our modern language. We talk today of being overwhelmed by or enslaved to passions, as if our minds include forces that are not parts of our self as such, but an alien intrusion, as when we say 'I don't know what came over me', or 'She was quite out of control'. Freudian psychology, with its hypothesis of the unconscious and repressed 'id', offers a further explanation for emotions as forces resistant to the would-be rationality of the conscious 'ego'.

Yet, when we reflect on typical instances of strong emotion—for instance, an outburst of anger or a fit of jealousy at someone else's success—it seems rather obvious that such states of mind are not like that. We don't typically get angry or jealous *for no reason*, but precisely because we think that someone is treating us badly or someone is achieving success that we, rather than he, deserves. We can say *why* we are angry or jealous, and even if we subsequently recognize that our anger or jealousy was not justified, it did not feel like a blind force taking us over against our will, but, as we often say in self-justification: 'you understand why I reacted like that', or 'you would have felt the same way'.

Influenced by such considerations, the ancient Stoics, like some contemporary philosophers, rejected the idea that emotions are the manifestation of an irrational or non-rational component to our minds. Rather, they proposed that, far from being animal-like drives, emotions actually are judgements, issuing from the mind in its motivational function, and manifesting complex beliefs and propositional attitudes; they are activities of a uniformly rational mind because only a rational mind could be subject to human emotions.[3] Indeed, they insisted, only a rational mind can act *irrationally*,

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[3] For the purpose of this study I often refer to 'the Stoics' generically without attempting to distinguish the contributions of individual philosophers or phases in the history of the school. I

meaning commit errors of judgement. And with this thought we reach the central Stoic doctrine: such emotions as anger and jealousy are basic errors of value judgement, mistakes in reasoning, impulses or motivations that exceed a correct and appropriate response to our situation. Such emotions are ultimately caused not by what has happened to us, making us passive victims of other people's behaviour. Instead, we make ourselves angry or jealous because we misjudge the harm we think is being done to us. According to this theory of the emotions, we are never entitled to say *we were taken over* by anger. We are as responsible for our emotions as we are for anything that we do, because what is at stake in our emotions is the one thing over which we supposedly have or could have complete control: our mental outlook on the world.

If the Stoics are right, we have far greater powers of understanding and managing our emotions than our modern cultural conventions and everyday attitudes suppose. But are they right? In order to approach that question, and before examining Epictetus' response to it, I need first to address the grim image of Stoicism that has come down to us; for our modern words Stoic and Stoical are actually defined in such terms as repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure and pain, and patient endurance.

II

Thanks to recent work, it has become clear that this cliché concerning the stony Stoic is a distortion almost as great as the image of Epicurus as proponent of a voluptuary life. What Stoics signified by the term *apatheia*, meaning impassivity, was not every mental state that we today would call a feeling or emotion. They recognized that human beings experience uncontrollable and gut reactions to sudden shocks, such as a thunderclap or an earthquake; they called these reactions 'pre-emotions' (*propatheiai*), to signify that they are instinctual reflexes as distinct from fully fledged emotions.[4] They also included 'good feelings' (*eupatheiai*)—wishing, caution, and joy—in their analysis of human excellence, treating such emotions as entirely proper motivations.[5]

set aside the divergences of Posidonius' Platonizing psychology from that of Chrysippus, which was accepted by the majority of later Stoics. For treatments of these refinements, see Sorabji 2000 and Tieleman 2003. LS ch. 65 provides a synopsis of the basic evidence.

[4] The best treatment of pre-emotions is Sorabji 2000, who calls them 'first movements'.

[5] See LS 65F for the definitions of 'good feelings': wishing (*boulēsis*) = well-reasoned stretching forth; caution (*eulabeia*) = well-reasoned avoidance; and joy (*chara*) = well-reasoned expansion.

Their recommended impassivity is a mind-set that is free from types of emotion (*pathos*) falling under the following four headings: two of them prospective—longing (*epithumia*) and fear (*phobos*)—and the other two pertaining to one's present mental state—intense pleasure (*hēdonē*) and grief (*lupē*).[6] From now on, I shall call these inappropriate emotions passions. We may gauge their scope by instancing some of the particular passions Stoics classified under these four generic headings—sexual lust, dread, malice, and envy. Many of the Stoic passions, inimical to impassivity, resemble deadly sins rather than the entire class of mental states we today call emotions.

The cause of any passion, according to Stoicism, is error of judgement, as I have already remarked. What kind of error? The answer is, a fundamentally mistaken system of values: treating external and bodily things that are neither unequivocally good (beneficial for us) nor unequivocally bad (harmful to us)—things that are outside our complete mental control—as if they are (*a*) absolutely good or bad respectively, and (*b*) warrants for us to react *excessively* by premising our faring well or badly upon such things; for instance, financial success, fame, good health, political power, even the survival of our loved ones, and the respective opposites of these contingencies.[7] The only sure policy for well-being, according to Stoicism, is to locate it exclusively in our mind-set and volition, and treat everything else as, comparatively speaking, 'indifferent'. The passions are over-reactions, motivating us to treat non-essential advantages or disadvantages as if they are basic to our well-being.

This is a tough agenda, yet it contains much truth, in my opinion, even though we are unlikely to agree with the Stoics' strict confinement of authentic goodness and badness to qualities of mind and controllable reactions. Passions, as the Stoics define them, are surely neither good for our mental health nor for our social behavior. We intuitively recognize the difference between feeling joy and pleasurable self-indulgence, or the difference between the reasonable wish for something and lusting after it. It is a complete mistake to

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[6] I add 'intense' to my translation of *hēdonē*, to distinguish the Stoic pleasure that is an emotion from the pleasure they took to be an involuntary and ethically indifferent by-product of natural human flourishing, on which see LS vol. 1, p. 421.

[7] As stated by Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.14, the Stoics defined the four cardinal passions as follows: 'longing' as the incorrect judgement that something good is in prospect and should be pursued; 'fear' as the incorrect judgement that something bad is in prospect and should be avoided; 'intense pleasure' as the incorrect and fresh judgement that something good is present at which one should be elated; and 'grief' as the incorrect and fresh judgement that something bad is present at which one should be depressed. For excellent discussion of Cicero's material, see Graver 2002.

regard Stoicism as advocating repression of emotion in every sense of the word. In addition, the material I want to discuss from Epictetus does not presume that he or we are capable of becoming perfect Stoics, but that we are capable, rather, of becoming persons who, though fallible, can learn to avoid at least a few emotional faults.

Yet, notwithstanding these correctives to the modern image of the stony Stoic, I have said nothing that rids Stoicism of the charge of being unworkable and unappealing in terms of elementary psychology. That charge is most telling, I think, in relation to the *pathos* of mental pain or grief (*lupē*). Epictetus tells his students that if Odysseus wept in longing for his wife, he must have been miserable, and therefore not an excellent person (3.24.17–19); for the genuinely excellent person is happy, possessing everything he wants, and this is the condition that the Stoic divinity intends for every person. Actually, Epictetus questions whether Homer has correctly characterized the grief of Odysseus; but that qualification hardly helps. We intuitively feel that Odysseus' grief is appropriate, and that he would be a much inferior person if he did not express his longing for Penelope accordingly.

Why do the Stoics take this hard line on grief, to the extent that they do not even recognize a 'good emotional state' corresponding to the *pathos* of grief (*lupē*)? If we can answer this question, we may not choose to become Stoics; but it may be as good as any route to understanding why they placed so high a premium on impassivity in the sense I have already explained.

III

There are several reasons why Epictetus merits particular attention for elucidating Stoic treatment of the emotions. First, as we shall shortly see in detail, he treats grief as the cardinal emotion from which we need to liberate ourselves. Secondly, his *Discourses* raise largely neglected questions about what we may call the emotional appeal of Stoicism. Is Epictetus, I want to ask, committed to the view that human nature is irreducibly emotional, meaning that, rather than seeking to turn his students into persons who largely repress their emotional propensities, he wants to train them into having the kind of motivations and affective responses that enhance their well-being and social performance? A third reason for my concentration on Epictetus is literary or rhetorical. He speaks with passion, fervour, and total engagement. Does his emotional tone have a bearing on his understanding of what emotions are and how his students should seek to understand them and manage them? Finally,

I have a fourth reason for dwelling on Epictetus. Emotions, I presume, are at least in part culturally determined. Epictetus is a marvellous resource for giving us a window on the kinds of concerns and anxieties that young and elite men in the Roman empire typically experienced.

Our text of his *Discourses* records educational sessions he held with his youthful pupils and occasional visitors to his school in western Greece, where he had settled after being exiled from Rome in about AD 95.[8] This setting is important for us to register as interpreters of his philosophy and its relation to the long-standing Stoic tradition. We can infer that he devoted much time, probably in the mornings. to expounding classic Stoic texts. In these sessions he will have explained the school's doctrines, defended them against the views of rival philosophers, and probably invited questions and challenges from his students. We have only glimpses of this formal teaching. Instead, the focus of the *Discourses* is consolidation of points he regards as fundamental. He advises his students on how to internalize Stoic philosophy, arguing that, while it is not the way for the faint-hearted, it is the only secure route to an excellent life of freedom, genuine happiness, and social utility.

The passions were a specific topic of Stoic ethics, treated systematically in a curriculum that included such other topics as the goal of life, goodness and badness, virtue, and so forth.[9] Epictetus, assuming that his students are familiar with that curriculum, proposes just three topics that are essential to the *practice* of Stoicism (3.2.1–4): (1) desires and aversions; (2) the positive and negative impulses pertaining to appropriate social interaction; and (3) advanced logic, insofar as that bears on achieving security in the first two fields. He then emphasizes the primacy of the first topic—desires and aversions—saying that it is the most 'authoritative' and 'especially urgent' because it deals with the passions; and he exemplifies the passions by listing 'disturbances, confusions, misfortunes, sorrows, groans, envies, and jealousies', saying that 'through these we are not even capable of listening to reason', meaning correct judgement.

His emphasis on this set of passions (ones that earlier Stoic authorities treated as instances of only one cardinal passion, grief) is very striking. No less striking is the fact that passion, together with its antidote, which I shall call emotional health, is at the heart of all three of his topics. Concerning the second topic, to do with appropriate social interaction, he says: 'I ought not

[8] For a comprehensive treatment of Epictetus, see Long 2002. Most of what I say about his treatment of the emotions in this study goes beyond that earlier book.

[9] See DL 7.84 (LS 56A).

to be impassive (*apathēs*) like a statue, but one who preserves his natural and acquired relationships, as a dutiful person, or son, or brother, or father, or citizen' (3.2.4). One's human interactions, then, are not to be so dispassionate that persons become impervious to their civic and familial relationships. As to the third topic, advanced logic, its practical scope covers the mental aptitude requisite to appropriate emotional responses even when one is dreaming, drunk, or clinically depressed. Epictetus, in accordance with his informal style, offers little by way of defining or classifying passions in the traditional Stoic manner. Yet, exemplification of the passions and the proper way to combat them are at the core of his teaching mission. We may best approach his characteristic strategies by recalling Stoic doctrines about the passions that he presupposes throughout.

In making the passions judgements or beliefs, the Stoics were not denying the feelings and physiological features of strong emotional experience. Their claim is that when we tremble with fear or shake with anger, we do so because we are experiencing or imagining something to which we have incorrectly imported the judgement that the object of our attention will be or already is harmful to us, and requiring us to react accordingly. The passions are consensual mental actions and impulses, grounded in our entrenched beliefs about what we want, because we mistakenly take some indifferent thing (like wealth) to be really good for us, or about what we seek to avoid, because we mistakenly take an indifferent thing (like poverty) to be really bad for us.

Expressed more technically, the principal components of a passion, or indeed of any mental action, involve first, a sensory or purely imagined impression (*phantasia*) of something, for instance, an insulting comment directed at us or an aggressive driver or a sexy body. Impressions befall us constantly; we are not responsible for their occurrence or for their immediate content. The second component is the mind's interpretive response to its impressions. Here we arrive at the crucial Stoic doctrine—the contribution of what they called the mind's 'assent'.[10] The basic idea is that, on experiencing an impression, it is up to us to decide whether to accept the contents of the impression as a truthful report on our objective situation, and more especially, as a report that should prompt us to react desirously or aversely, or, as the Stoics also said, trigger our impulses and bodily actions. Yet, what assent involves is clearly far more complex than simply saying 'yes'

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[10] For a full discussion of these technicalities, see Inwood 1985, and for a more summary treatment Long 1999*b*.

or 'no' to impressions. It involves (even if unconsciously and immediately) interpretation, assessment, and indeed one's entire character and mental disposition. How one assents and how one evaluates one's impressions are the critical questions. The passions, as the Stoics understand them, are misjudgements and incorrect evaluations of mental impressions.

Nothing I have said so far fully explains why the Stoics were so hostile to passions. One could accept the psychology I have just outlined, and even the doctrine that material well-being is inessential to happiness, and still conclude, as Aristotle did, that some measure of grief or anger is the correct and reasonable response to certain experiences. In order to make their case against the passions, the Stoics need to prove that they are never justifiable and always incompatible with the well-being that all human beings naturally desire for themselves. That is the tough thesis that Epictetus argues for.

The best starting point for understanding his teaching on the passions is a quite general claim that he makes concerning human nature. The claim, which goes right back to Socrates, is that we are so constituted as human beings that we are always desirously motivated towards what we take to be good for ourselves, aversely motivated towards what we take to be bad for ourselves, and neutrally motivated towards what we take to be neither good nor bad (3.3.2). He likens these motivations to our human nature's natural propensity to assent to truths, dissent from falsehoods, and suspend judgement about uncertainties. We are, then, natural lovers of truth and of goodness, meaning lovers of what we take to be truth and goodness, about which, of course, we may be and frequently are radically mistaken. He puts the same points in another way by endorsing the proposition that the source of all human action is *pathein*, that is, being so affected that we assent to the *feeling* that something is true or false or uncertain, and are motivated to pursue what we *feel* to be advantageous. He continues: 'It is impossible to judge something to be advantageous and yet desire something else, or to judge something appropriate and be motivated to go after something else' (1.18.1–2).

Epictetus is an epistemic, affective, and evaluative determinist: he claims that we are incapable of *akrasia*, meaning fully judging something to be good for ourselves, and not going after it. Which brings us to his most characteristic slogan — the supreme importance of *making correct use of our mental impressions* (*phantasiai*), which are the moment-by-moment experiences that come to us through our senses or our imagination. Mental impressions give us our evidence about the world, but they are only 'appearances'. As such, they may be either veridical or non-veridical, showing the truth and value of

things as they really are, or misleading us as to their truth content and value. Yet, to the extent that we find mental impressions truthful and indicative of advantage or disadvantage to us, we cannot fail to be motivated accordingly. Thus (1.28.12–13) we are to judge the entire Homeric *Iliad* as 'nothing but an impression and the [incorrect] use of impressions' experienced by Paris (motivating lust), Helen (motivating sexual pleasure), and Menelaus (motivating desire for revenge).

The determinism I have attributed to Epictetus is, of course, entirely conditional on our character and system of values. He is emphatically not saying that how we emotionally react to experience or impressions is not 'up to us', but exactly the opposite. The reaction is up to us precisely because it depends on who we are, what we take ourselves to be, and the value we place on things. The crucial points he is making are: (1) that we are *naturally* beings with desirous and emotional mentalities; and (2) that we cannot fail to have desires and emotions corresponding to the way we judge the world, both in terms of truth and in terms of value or advantage to ourselves. So I am answering 'Yes' to my question about whether Epictetus regards human nature as *irreducibly* emotional—emotional not in the sense of Stoic passion of course, but in the sense of being necessarily moved or motivated by our naturally desirous mentality.

To get a closer hold on his position, we should consider how he analyses the relation of our desirous mentality to *pathos* on the one hand and emotional health or well-being on the other hand. The goal of his first topic, 'desires and aversions', is ensuring that we neither fail to get what we desire nor encounter what we wish to avoid (3.2.1). He presumes, then, very plausibly, that happiness or unhappiness is respectively based on fulfilment or frustration of desires, that is, getting or failing to get what we judge to be good for ourselves. What can we do to try to assure the complete success of our desires? Answer: restrict them and their objectives to those items that are completely up to us to achieve, irrespective of external contingencies.

Well, we *can* only desire things that *appear good* to ourselves. The non-Stoic, as we have seen, locates goodness in numerous things that depend on bodily health and external contingencies, and imports negative judgements, such as fearfulness, to numerous impressions that she has. But these are all false judgements. For it turns out, according to Stoicism, that the only unequivocally good and desirable thing, being motivated by correct judgement, is completely up to us to achieve, and correspondingly, that the only unequivocally bad and undesirable thing, being motivated by

incorrect judgement, is completely up to us to avoid. Hence, if we orient our motivations to what is really good (acting on the basis of correct judgement) and treat everything else as comparatively indifferent, our naturally desirous mentality can succeed in its aims and assure us of living well. That, at least, is the tough Stoic claim.

In a discourse that begins with a discussion of mental impressions, Epictetus locates the origin of passion in 'wanting something and not getting it' (1.27.10). And he continues, speaking as a non-Stoic:

Wherever [A] I can change external things to suit my will, I change them; but if [B] I cannot, I want to blind the one who is impeding me. It is a human being's nature not to endure deprivation of the good, not to endure involvement in the bad. Then finally [C] when I can neither change the material things nor blind the one who impedes me, I sit down and groan and abuse whomever I can, including Zeus and the other divinities.

We have the following sequence: A, a desire to manipulate the world to suit one's will; if A is unsuccessful, B follows—a desire to remove impediments frustrating A; if B is unsuccessful, C follows—frustration manifesting itself in grief. Translated into official Stoic doctrine, the A desire is a passion consisting in the incorrect judgement that some external item would be unequivocally good for me to get; the B desire is the passion of anger consisting in the incorrect judgement that it would be unequivocally good for me to punish the impediment to satisfying A; and C, grief, is the incorrect judgement motivating me to be depressed by my failure to satisfy the desires A and B.

By exhibiting the sequence in this way we can solve a puzzle in Epictetus' claim that passion (*pathos*) as such derives from 'wanting something and not getting it'. At face value that diagnosis seems appropriate only to the *pathos* of grief (*lupē*)—the incorrect judgement that, in consequence of frustrated desire, one is experiencing something unequivocally bad for oneself. Indeed Oldfather, the translator of the Loeb edition of Epictetus, renders *pathos* in this context by 'sorrow'. But I think that's a mistake. There are in fact two aspects to Epictetus' diagnosis of passion: 'wanting' as well as 'not getting'. The prospective passions of longing and fear are defined in terms of wants: to get, or to avoid, things we mistakenly take to be unequivocally good or bad respectively. As to the fourth cardinal passion, intense pleasure (*hēdonē*), Epictetus would presumably insist that this passion will ensue if either desire A or desire B is successful.

However, I also think that this is only a superficial part of what Epictetus is proposing here. At a deeper level I suggest that he wants us to regard grief as the primary passion because, although passion does take other forms, no desires can be genuinely and lastingly successful which are premised on purely external objectives, no pleasures can be genuinely and lastingly satisfying that accompany the fulfilment of such desires, and fear of what circumstances may bring to one is bound to generate the further judgement that one is already in a bad state. This interpretation of the causality of all *pathos*, 'wanting something and not getting it', fits Epictetus' constant focus on the blessings of identifying one's authentic good with the properly rational disposition of one's will, which he characteristically praises in such words as unimpededness, freedom, and serenity.[11]

Thus the ABC sequence I have analysed yields a positive emotional message, in tune with Epictetus' standard recommendations on how to avoid *pathos*. He characterizes desire A as 'changing externals, wherever I can do so, to suit my will'. An Epictetan, by contrast, *seeks to adapt his will to externals*, not in the sense that he modifies his moral priorities according to circumstances, but in the sense that he seeks to make the best possible use of every material situation while remaining relatively detached from the outcome. Thus Epictetus tell his students: 'It is unconditionally incumbent on us to be skillful in our handling of any external material, but rather than making it part of ourselves we should treat it, whatever it is, as the context for displaying our skill' (2.5.21).

One of his most interesting adaptive antidotes to passion is what Richard Sorabji (2000, 222) has well called 'relabelling'. You find yourself in a so-called turbulent crowd; then relabel it a 'festival'. You are alone, but instead of saying you are 'lonely', call your situation peaceful (4.4.24–6). This recommendation helps to explain the importance of making correct use of our impressions. They appear to us, independently of our will, but it is up to us to describe and evaluate them, neither accepting them at face value nor letting them predetermine our emotional responses. The would-be Stoic, then, should not find herself faced with unfulfilled desires (thinking she has missed out on what's really good), and the consequential passion of grief.

This is not to say that such a person, according to Stoicism, will have no innate preferences and disinclinations in regard to such things as health, property, family, native land, and so forth. But, as Epictetus would have us

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[11] See e.g. 1.4.3; 1.17.21–8; 2.2.1–7.

think, we can only secure our well-being, emotional health, and consistently good performance of our social roles if we detach our essential identity from everything that falls outside the mind's self-determining capacities and unfrustratable volitions.

IV

In the final section of this chapter I should like to pursue further questions about Epictetus' Stoic assumptions and also about his cultural context. Why, for instance, is he so committed to the thought that the greatest threat to well-being is impeded desire? How does the kind of impassivity he recommends relate to his moral agenda concerning the proper preservation of our social relationships? Nor should we forget the disquiet he will evoke in most readers by criticizing Homer's Odysseus for grieving over the hero's long-lost Penelope.

One way of responding to such questions would take us into Stoic theology, with its twin axioms of divine providence and fate or determinism.[12] In the Stoic universe, passionate emotion, pitting strictly personal and subjective affect against the divinely determined course of events (including the inevitability of death, sickness, and so forth), is taken to be irrational, pointless, a gross failure to live in accordance with the necessary facts of life. Let us grant all that. But one could still imagine a Stoic universe in which the divinity thought it appropriate for the wise man to feel some anger or grief, if not over his own plight, then over the behaviour or circumstances of antisocial persons. And might a benevolent god not find it appropriate that even a wise person should experience some frustration to his desires?

I don't think these questions can be fully answered by reference to providential theology and determinism. There needs to be something about the incorrect judgements constitutive of passions, as such, that makes them the main focus of Epictetus' attention. One answer I should like to propose is that passions always *mar our performance* by reducing us to the level of non-rational animals, and thereby inhibit us from fully executing our 'profession' as human beings.[13]

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[12] In Long 1989 I argue that these axioms are essential for making sense of Stoic eudaimonism.

[13] Epictetus takes our human identity to confer a 'profession' on us, which demands training and expertise analogous to those of an expert craftsman, see Chapter 2 above, p. 37, and Long 2002, 232–44.

One does not need to read much of Epictetus to register his constant emphasis on exemplary performance—performing morally like an Olympic athlete, wanting to be the red stripe in the Roman toga, telling the emperor that he can chain one's legs but not one's will, and so forth.[14] He repeatedly presents his students with ordinarily very disturbing situations, such as imperial threats, prospects of execution, imprisonment, exile, confiscation of property; and he does so not only because these imagined situations graphically exemplify challenges an ideal Stoic would surmount, but more especially because they represent situations his elite students may actually encounter. Notwithstanding his focus on interiority and cultivation of the right emotional disposition, Epictetus is always telling his students how they should *display* themselves in the social world. His *Discourses* are packed with vivid passages in which he imagines how someone would or should react when asked to carry the imperial chamberpot, or is stripped of his senatorial toga, or finds himself confronted by the imperial guard.[15] We can, of course, convert such passages into more contemporary challenges, but there is no question that the context of the *Discourses* is the brutal and autocratic world of the Roman empire.

The kind of exemplary performance Epictetus requires his students to emulate is clearly incompatible with the outward signs of grief—trembling, groaning, weeping. Anticipating Montaigne (*Essais* 1.18), he says that the thing we most need to fear is fear itself (2.16.19; cf. 2.1.14). While Epictetus insists that every passion is wrong, including sexual lust, he can describe a lover's violent feelings as almost forgiveable and virtually 'divine' (4.1.147).[16] Fear and grief are his main preoccupation, with anger also figuring prominently. He takes a strong stand on male gender roles, radically distancing himself from effeminate and sexually ambiguous behaviour.[17] Unlike his teacher Musonius Rufus, whose discourses included enlightened comments on women's aptitude for philosophy, Epictetus' focus is almost exclusively male. He seeks to turn his young male students into real men, *men in full*, to borrow Tom Wolfe's title from his Epictetan novel.[18]

Epictetus' most memorable passages are ones in which he imagines the true Stoic's exemplary performance under threats that would certainly intimidate the ordinary person. The rhetoric he employs in such passages imports the

[14] See 1.2.18; 3.25.1–5; 4.1.72–3.
[15] See 1.2.5–11; 1.24.12–19; 4.7.1–11 (discussed below).
[16] Contrast Cicero's censorious judgement on succumbing to sexual desire, *Tusc.* 4.75–6.
[17] 1.16.9–14; 3.1. Cf. Long 2000, 96–8.   [18] *A Man in Full* (New York, 1998).

positive emotional affect crucial to his teaching, harsh though that instruction often is in tone. His Stoic regimen promises confidence in place of fear, serenity in place of distress, contentment with what one has been granted, eagerness to make oneself a man for all seasons.

Passions, I have been arguing, mar the performance of manly action, as Epictetus construes that. Yet, we would completely misrepresent Epictetus if we reduced his passion-free male ideal to conventional images of macho toughness, braggadocio, or insensitivity to the feelings of other persons. The manliness Epictetus envisions is far more revisionary than it is conventional.

In my book on Epictetus (Long 2002) I drew attention to his recommended tolerance towards wrongdoers, based on the grounds that their errors are due to ignorance of where their true interest lies; his insistence that we are never justified in retaliating, or criticizing people for failure to act towards us as we think they should; the outward empathy he finds appropriate in Stoic comforters; and his readiness even to go against the Stoic tradition's hostility to pity (pp. 251–3). Here I want to focus on the impropriety of anger and its connection with grief.

Nothing about the Stoic doctrine of the passions is more remarkable, in its ancient context, than their view that anger is absolutely never justified.[19] Aristotle had voiced the conventional ancient view that a free and self-respecting man would be 'slavish' not to get angry at insults to himself and his family (*EN* 4, 1126a7–8). The context of his comment, strange as it may seem, is the virtue of gentleness (*praotēs*). Of this Aristotle writes: 'The gentle man wants to be undisturbed (*atarachos*) and not pulled by passion, but to get angry only in the circumstances and for the duration that reason warrants' (1125b33–5). Epictetus and the Stoics reverse the image: it is slavish ever to give way to anger, and to any other passion. Anger can never be appropriately moderate or proportional, as Aristotelian ethics had proposed. Marcus Aurelius, taking his lead, as so often, from Epictetus, explicitly characterizes gentleness as 'more manly because it is more human . . . As this disposition is closer to impassivity, so it is closer to power. Anger is just as much a sign of weakness as grief; for both have been wounded and have surrendered to the wound' (11.18.5).

Epictetus takes the fratricidal conflict over political power between the sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polyneices, as a key illustration of this position.

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[19] See Burnyeat 2002, reviewing W. Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002). I draw on Burnyeat's excellent comments in the rest of this paragraph.

The discourse (4.5) in which he diagnoses their mutual hostility is remarkable because it presents Stoic impassivity as the foundation of domestic love and civic concord. An extended excerpt is in order, as I draw this chapter to a conclusion.

Everything everywhere is perishable and easy to attack. Whoever sets his heart on any such thing must be disturbed, discouraged, a prey to anxiety and distress, with desires that are unfulfilled and aversions that are fully realized . . . Don't we recall that no one does injury or benefit to another, but that the cause of these things is a judgement? It is this that does harm and wreckage; this is battle and civic strife and war.

What generated Eteocles and Polyneices was simply this—their judgement concerning power and their judgement concerning exile, taking the latter to be the worst of bad things and the former to be the greatest of goods. This is everyone's nature, to pursue the good and to avoid the bad, and to consider him who deprives us of the one and inflicts us with the opposite as a foe and a plotter, even if he is a brother or a son or a father; for nothing is more closely related to us than the good.

So if these things [power, etc.] are good and bad [exile, etc.], no father is dear to his sons or brother to brother, but everything is full of wars, plots, and informers. But if correct will and judgement are the only good and incorrect will and judgement the only bad thing, what place is left for battles and contentions? About what things? About things that are nothing to us? With those who are ignorant, with those who are unfortunate, with those who have been deceived about what really matters?[20]

The passions, according to this passage, are not only inimical to our long-term well-being as individuals, they are also, prefiguring Freud's great work *Civilization and its Discontents*, responsible for every disruption of appropriate human relationships. By projecting our desires and emotions onto our bodies and the external world, rather than on the rational performance of our roles as 'professional' human beings, we lose more than autonomy; we also lose the capacity to love others as distinct from simply wanting them or appropriating them or using them.

What is involved at the limit, in Epictetus' teaching on the passions, is undisguisedly meant to be radical, revisionary, an ideal human potentiality even at the risk of affronting us with criticism of Odysseus' grief. I think we are to suppose that such grief, if it were actual, would betoken a serious flaw in the hero's general mentality. Once we give way to grief, blaming the system

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[20] 4.5.27–32. For discussion of the bearing of this passage on Epictetus' concepts of autonomy and integrity, see Long 2002, 226–9.

as it were, what is put in jeopardy is not only our well-being as individuals but also our good conduct, or stellar performance, in relation to other persons: we want to retaliate and get even. Moreover, we likely think that this reaction is not simply emotional but also natural and even reasonable.

Epictetus gets under our skin because he squarely faces such rejoinders. He repeatedly insists, as we have seen, that people always act and react on the basis of the values and judgements they take to be reasonable (1.2.1–5) and natural (1.11.5). What he asks of us, if we want to understand our emotions and properly manage them, is that we start by putting into question our intuitive feelings about what we find reasonable and natural. In order to help us do that, he offers us thought experiments, as any good philosopher should do.

You say, for instance, that it is natural and reasonable to be petrified when you are summoned to the tyrannical emperor with the imperial guard menacing you. Then consider the following scenarios (4.7.1–11): a young child, who displays no fear of guards and emperor because he does not perceive them under the description of armed men. Now consider an adult who does so perceive them, but without fear because in his situation he welcomes an easy death at their hands. Next envision someone else, not a would-be suicide, but a man who does not stake everything on either living or dying; could he not be fearless? Next imagine someone so deranged that he is as heedless of his property and family as the last person was of his bodily person, treating everything material as only kids' stuff to play with competitively; he too wouldn't fear the tyrant or his armed guards. Finally consider the fearlessness of Christian martyrs, which is engendered by their religious attitude.

Child, would-be suicide, maniac, Christian martyr—hedged between these four extreme examples is the Stoic, the one 'who does not stake *everything* on living or dying'. Epictetus leaves it to his hearers to make this provisional identification. He then asks rhetorically (I paraphrase): Surely reason and proof concerning the world's providential direction, human psychology, and mind-centred goodness are capable of generating fearlessness if even mania and Christianity can do so? We have an a fortiori argument, intended to block the conventional claim that fear of the tyrant is both natural and reasonable. It is not natural, in the sense of humanly inevitable, because it does not induce fear in everyone. It is not reasonable, in the sense of being the necessary conclusion of true premises, because if Stoic theology, psychology, and ethics are correct, intense fear is never justified.

I conclude with this strange passage because it is not only characteristically Epictetan; it also shows that, in the end, his teaching on the passions,

and indeed Stoic impassivity as such, presupposes the whole package of Stoic philosophy. If we decline to sign for that package, we lose the underpinnings or rationale for deriving consistently positive affect from Stoic impassivity.

Yet, you have only to read state-of-the-art books on the emotions to appreciate that modern philosophers, who have no interest in Stoicism, have re-created much that is present in Epictetus' more analytical passages. Some philosophers have agreed completely with the Stoics in taking emotions to be judgements for which we can be held responsible because they are *chosen* interpretations of experience.[21] Others come close to Stoicism in proposing that the core of emotions consists in attitudes with which we colour the world on the basis of our beliefs and desires.[22] Epictetus, as I have tried to show, is strongly embedded in his ancient context; but he is also a philosopher in full, regardless of temporality.

[21] See Solomon 1980, 270–1.   [22] See Wollheim 1999, 15–17.

Bibliography

The following abbreviations are used:

ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
BICS	*Bulletin of the University of London Institute of Classical Studies*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
OSAP	*Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*
PCPhS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
RE	Pauly–Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der Klassischen Altestumswissenschaft*
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*

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